

NEDL TRANSFER



HN 1TDU R

KD 8222

DAILY MEDITATIONS
—
VOLUME I.

As a Religious Community, occupied largely with intellectual work, we seek to make the production of any member of the Order the expression of the convictions and standards of the whole Community. The Rule requires that the Superior shall pass upon "any volume which appears bearing the name of any member, or issued by the Order, such volume having first received the approval of two professed members of the Order." This regulation has been observed in regard to previous works. It seems well that in the case of "Daily Meditations" assurance should be given that it has been carefully considered by two members of the Order, and has their entire approval and that of the Superior.

JAMES O. S. HUNTINGTON,
Superior, O. H. C.

DAILY MEDITATIONS

ON THE CHRISTIAN LIFE
FOR EVERY DAY IN THE YEAR

BY

McVEIGH HARRISON, O. H. C.

—
VOLUME I.

*From Advent Sunday to the end of the
Whitsun Octave*



PUBLISHED AT SAINT ANDREW'S
SEWANEE, TENNESSEE



Wise Education

Copyright 1915
By McVEIGH HARRISON, O.H.C.
Sewanee Tennessee

The University Press of Sewanee Tennessee

TO MY MOTHER
AND MY SISTER ELIZABETH
WHO HAS BEEN TO ME A
SECOND MOTHER
THIS BOOK IS LOVINGLY
DEDICATED



P R E F A C E

MY earnest desire in writing these pages has been to supply suggestive and stimulating material to those who practice regular meditation. I have tried to convey to them the best results of ten years' study as these have been sifted out through my own meditations and the Retreats I have given. In the Religious Life there is provided a unique opportunity for reading Holy Scripture and spiritual writers, and one is taught to use what he thus learns, in his mental prayer. But after he has assimilated what has been given him, it becomes his duty and privilege to give others the fruit of the precious hours he has been granted in the library and chapel of his monastery. He hears the Church calling him to make the best contribution of which he is capable to the devotional life of her priests and lay people who are less favored than he with leisure for study.

It will be seen from this statement of the genesis of "Daily Meditations," and more, I hope, from the perusal of the book, that practically all of the ideas in it came originally from the Bible, the saints, or the scholars of the Church. The writer has aspired to no higher office than that of a spout to the fountain of divine wisdom.

Yet he is humbly conscious that the quantity and quality of the stream depend greatly upon the spout being free from leaks and obstructions. And on every page I have asked for my readers' confidence in my excellence as a channel, that is, in my diligence, accuracy, and judgment. It was inevitable from my method that I should do this. For my book, since it provides meditations on the yearly course of the Christian life, must take up and apply the great basic doctrines of our religion; it must cast new light upon our Church duties and afford new inspiration to the daily practice of the Christian virtues. Now, one principal way in which I could accomplish these results was by having recourse to that treasury of the Scriptures from which the great Catholic Fathers and saints have drawn their doctrines, and their faith and love; by delving, with their guidance, beneath the too-familiar surface, I hoped that I could bring forth some of the little-known divine content, of the Bible, for the edification of souls. But I shall welcome corrections of the translations and exegesis which I have worked out according to this plan.

It will be noticed that some thoughts are suggested again and again in the meditations. This method, rather than one affording greater variety, was adopted as the outcome of my own spiritual experience and that of many others. For what we need to find in our morning devotions is, not intellectual pleasure in an ingeniously diversified course of pious readings,

but help toward the exercise of those all-inclusive Christian virtues which we require in order to overcome our temptations and do our Christian service day by day. Therefore, meditations on faith, love, self-denial, and the like, recur frequently.

Scholarly friends have helped me greatly by reading parts of my manuscript and making some very necessary corrections and excellent suggestions. My thanks in this regard are especially due to the Rev. Erskine Wright, B.A., the Rev. Thomas Bingham, M.A., the Rev. F. C. Powell, S. S. J. E., and the Rev. J. G. H. Barry, D.D. The revising committee provided me by my Order has rendered me constant and invaluable assistance. I would put quotation marks quite frequently through the book to indicate their copious contributions but that they forbid me to do so. I am sure, however, that my readers will allow for the community of goods which obtains among religious.

MCVEIGH HARRISON, O.H.C.

St. Andrew's, Sewanee, Tennessee,
Octave Day of All Saints, 1915.

A METHOD OF MEDITATION

So many people have asked to be told how to make a meditation, that I am led to offer the following as being a simple method comprehending all the essentials of helpful mental prayer:

Kneel down and place yourself in the Presence of God. Say the *Veni Creator Spiritus*, the Our Father, and the collect for Whitsunday.

Read first the citation of Scripture, slowly and thoughtfully, and then the first point of the meditation, drawing from these as keen an intellectual interest as possible. Use your imagination freely to picture the persons and scenes suggested, trying to make them vivid before your mind. The first necessity of a good meditation is attractive material for thought upon which one may readily concentrate one's attention. If the first point does not provide this, go on to the second, and if necessary to the third.

You will in this way discover some new motive, or strengthen some previous one, for the love of God. Your second step is to allow, or if need be force, your *will* (never mind if your emotions do not respond) to kindle under the inspiration of this motive into a steady flame of divine charity.

Out of your love must then arise some resolution, of self-amendment, of service to your neighbor, or of glorifying God, upon which you are to act during the day before you. Generally your resolution will be to perform better what you have already undertaken, rather than to attempt some new enterprise.

Conclude with prayers, especially the *Anima Christi*, for grace to keep your resolution.

Apart from the prayers, you may kneel or sit, according as you find the one posture or the other more conducive to the concentration of your faculties on the meditation.

CONTENTS

TITLE	PAGE
Putting on Christ	1
Christ in the Church Militant	2
Forwardness in Spiritual Enterprise	3
Returning to Our First Love	4
The Examination of Conscience	5
Satan	6
Walking with Christ in White	8
Joy and Peace in Believing	9
The Church	10
The Book of Life	11
Vocation	11
The Names on Our Foreheads	12
The Christian Feast of Tabernacles	13
Our True Riches	14
The Priesthood	15
God's Wondrous Gifts of Grace	16
The Fruit of the Tree of Life	17
Works of Love	18
Social Power of the Christian	19
Tepidity	20
The Missionary Opportunity	21
A Holy Death	22
The Particular Judgment	24
Looking Away to Jesus	25
The Second Death	26
The Crown of Life	27
The Sun of Righteousness	28
The God-man	29
Life and Immortality with Jesus	30
Consecration of Our Will	31
Suffering for Christ's Sake	33
The Appeal of the Nativity	34
The Son of Man	35
The Blessed Mother	36
Jesus Suffers as Our Saviour	37
Christian Renewal	38
Christian Obedience	39

Christian Faith	40
Faith, the Star Leading Us to Christ.....	41
Christ the Light of the World.....	43
Our Epiphany	44
The Incarnation and the Blessed Sacrament.....	46
Wisdom through Living the Hidden Life	47
Knowledge of God in Christ	48
The Substance of This Knowledge	49
Increase of Knowledge	50
Meditation as a Means of Knowledge	51
Proving God's Will	52
The Mercies of God	54
Divine Help in Our Troubles	56
To Have Our Own Way is Perilous.....	57
The Gifts of the Magi.....	58
Finding Jesus in Our Hearts	59
Christ in Our Spiritual Life.....	60
"Thou Hast Kept the Good Wine".....	61
The Miracle of Cana Repeated in Me	62
Love of Christ Without Dissimulation.....	64
The Good Wine Gained through the Discipline of Prayer..	65
The Lessons of Faith	66
Spiritual Discipline	67
Overcoming Evil with Good	68
The Power of Love	69
The Vision of Christ	70
The Discipline of St. Paul	71
St. Paul's Weakness and Strength	72
St. Paul's Greatest Work.....	74
Union with God through Humility	75
Spiritual Welfare Preëminent.....	77
Godliness (I).....	78
Godliness (II).....	79
Poverty	80
Escape from the World with Jesus	82
The Desert of Self-denial.....	83
Homesickness for Heaven	84
To the Greater Glory of Jesus	85
Devotion of Ourselves to Jesus	86
Lowliness	87
Glorifying God by Service.....	88
Glorifying God by Our Lives	90

Glorifying God by Eucharistic Worship (I)	91
Glorifying God by Eucharistic Worship (II)	92
Eagles of Jesus	93
The Vision	95
The Inward Grace	96
The Gift of Ourselves	97
The Work of Our Great High Priest	98
Our Sanctification	99
Effectiveness Dependent on Spirituality	100
Order in Our Spiritual Life	101
Self-Discipline	102
Working in the Vineyard	103
Our Spiritual Equipment for Service	104
The Inspiration of Our Service	105
Some Rules of Service	107
Special Kinds of Service	108
Fertile to the Divine Seed	109
The Honest and Good Heart	110
The Honest and Good Heart Believing	111
Our Hearts Made Good by Baptism	112
We were Sanctified by Grace in Baptism	113
We Receive the Blessed Trinity in Baptism	115
Our Regeneration in Baptism	116
Our Baptismal Vows	117
Sins after Baptism	118
Our Lenten Shrift	119
Our Spiritual Warfare	120
Sin Means Missing the Mark	121
Sin is Lawlessness	122
Called to be Saints	123
Christ's Temptation and Ours	124
The Three Typical Temptations (I)	125
The Three Typical Temptations (II)	127
Confidence under Temptation	128
The Virtues by Which We Overcome Temptation	129
The Power of the Cross in Temptation	130
Meditation on the Passion, against Temptation	131
The Progress of Our Sanctification	132
The Merit of Purity	133
The Chastity of the Bridegroom	134
The Chastity of Christ's Bride	135
Our Nuptials with Jesus	136

Satisfying Christ's Thirst on the Cross	137
Divine Love Overshadowing Us	138
The Life of Love	140
Bearing Little Crosses for Love's Sake.....	141
Doing Penance for Love's Sake.....	142
Merit of Suffering Borne for Love's Sake.....	143
Suffering for Love of Others (I).....	144
Suffering for Love of Others (II).....	145
Loving Reparation to Jesus.....	147
Christian Ambition.....	148
Christian Quietness	149
Christian Ambition—To be Poor with Christ	150
Ambition to Hear Christ's Subtler Calls.....	151
Ambition to Conquer Our Besetting Sin.....	152
Ambition for Spiritual Progress.....	154
Ambition for More Righteousness.....	155
The Passion, the Remedy for Sick Souls	156
The Cross the Measure of God's Love.....	157
Courage from the Cross (I).....	158
Courage from the Cross (II)	160
Charity from the Cross	161
Suffering in Fellowship with the Crucified	162
Humility a Gift from the Cross	163
The Church Revealed in the Passion	165
Conversion Through the Passion	166
Prayer Taught Us in the Passion	167
Coming Forth from Lent Crucified with Christ.....	168
The Christian Passover	170
The Sin Bearer	171
Spiritual Life is the Life that has Passed through Death ..	172
The Queen of Feasts.....	173
Christ's Joy in His Resurrection for Our Sake.....	175
Our Joy for, and with, Our Lord in His Resurrection.....	176
The Risen Christ Our Life	177
The Risen Christ Delivering Us from Death	179
The Risen Christ Breaking the Power of Sin	180
Devotion of Self to the Risen Christ	181
Peace through the Risen Prince of Peace	182
My Life in Christ Risen	183
The First Resurrection	185
Finding the Cross	186
Peace with Ourselves	188

Peace with Our Neighbor through the Risen Christ (I)	189
Peace with Our Neighbor through the Risen Christ (II) ..	190
Hope through the Good Shepherd	191
The Power of Faith in Our Lord's Resurrection	193
Easter Teaching about Holy Communion	194
The Good Shepherd Desiring to Give Us His Risen Life..	195
Receiving the Gift of Christ's Risen Life	196
Practicing the Presence of the Risen Lord.....	198
The Resurrection Sealing the Truth of Christ's Words.....	199
The Joy of Life from the Risen Christ.....	200
Concentrating Our Spiritual Vision upon Jesus Risen	201
Easter and Penitence	203
The Glory of Penitence	204
Our Own Resurrection	205
Our Resurrection Body Prepared by Christ in Heaven	206
Christ Conforming Us to Himself.....	208
Devotion to Catholic Truth	209
Means to Increase Our Faith	210
Faith in the Unseen World	212
The Intermediate State	213
Prayers for the Holy Dead	215
The Qualities of Our Risen Body	216
Holy Unction	217
Prayer for Temporal Benefits.....	219
Our Dispositions in Prayer	220
Mistaken Prayers	222
Apparent Fruitlessness of Prayer	223
Christ's Work in Heaven.....	224
Looking Up to Jesus.....	226
Turning to the Stronghold.....	227
Prayers in Church	228
Holy Familiarity with God in Prayer.....	229
Intercession	230
Mental Prayer	232
The Prayers of the Saints	233
Our Lord's Example in Prayer.....	234
The Spirit of Supplications.....	235
The Spirit of Union.....	237
The Spirit of Truth	238
The Spirit of Power	239
The Indwelling of the Holy Ghost	240
The Spirit of Consecration	241

The Spirit of Sonship to God	242
The Spirit of Love	243
Obedience to the Heavenly Vision	245
The Dedication of My Saviour	246
The Holy Ghost, not "Chance," Controlling Us	247
God's Love for Mary, and Ours	249
Christ Strengthening the Weak	250
Christ Spiritualizing the Practical Temperament	251
A Soa of Exhortation	253

ABBREVIATIONS USED

A. V.=Authorized (King James's) Version.
 A. V. marg.=“Marginal Readings” edition of the Authorized Version.
 R. V.=Revised Version, Oxford edition.
 R. V. marg.=marginal reading of the Revised Version.
 f.=the next verse in addition to the one cited.
 ff.=the next two verses in addition to the one cited.
 lit.=literally translated; single quotation marks (‘ ’) also indicate a literal translation, unless explained in the text as inclosing a paraphrase.
 All citations are inclusive of the last verse cited.



DAILY MEDITATIONS

Advent Sunday

Putting on Christ.

Read the Epistle for the Day.

I. The foreword for the Christian year is, "It is high time to awake out of sleep. . . . Let us walk honestly as in the day. . . . Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ." It enjoins upon us to be endued with the character of God as revealed to us in our Lord, and this mantle of godliness is the clothing we must wear in the light of heavenly day. "Let us walk becomingly," or "decorously," "as in the day," when we shall emerge from the darkness of this life into the radiance of eternal morning. Elsewhere St. Paul declares that when we were baptized we *first* put on Christ; but here he refers to those continual conversions by which we become ever more and more like God.

II. The way in which we thus become conformed to the First-born is by patient copying. In the school we set before the children the character to be imitated by their awkward hands. At first, indeed, we must help the little one to guide his stumbling pen, but as day by day he copies faithfully, it becomes ever easier for him to frame the character rightly, until at last he can do it without effort. Now it has become his own through patient practice. So does the Holy Ghost take of Christ and show it unto us for a copy, and then helping our infirmities guide

us to practice and practice again what He has revealed, until He has made it second nature to us.

III. The divine character which is to clothe us is, in a word, *love*. Our Saviour, just before He consummated His life of love by one final great act of charity on the Cross, said, "A new commandment give I unto you, that ye love one another as I have loved you." Never before had God's people been enjoined to love as He loves, but since Calvary we are to be as perfectly loving as the eternal Son dying on the Cross for His creatures.



Monday after the First Sunday in Advent

Christ in the Church Militant.

Read Rev. i:9-20

I. Our Lord sent the Seven Letters of the Revelation to the Church, on the verge of the terrible Domitian persecution. A grave doubt troubled His disciples on earth. Why did He delay His coming while one imperial persecution after another afflicted them? It was to cheer and strengthen His Church that Jesus revealed Himself as being in her very midst through all her troubles. His long robe girt about the Breast shows His High Priesthood. "His snow-white hair suggests to us venerable age; but when we should look for eyes that are very gentle, or that were filled with the wise tenderness of age, we find that His eyes were as a flame of fire. In Him there is not only a beauty as of silvered age; there is also a fire and heroism as of youth." So it is that old men and maidens, young men and children, find in Him their strength and their consolation.

II. The seven candlesticks represent the Catholic Church in her sanctuary, where Christ appears amid

the lights of the altar. "The world seeth Me no more, but ye see Me," He has said. The seven stars symbolize the Church in the firmament of God shining upon the world's darkness.

III. When St. John fell at our Lord's Feet, overcome and nearly slain by the vision of His Majesty, Christ laid His Right Hand upon His servant's head. The gracious words of encouragement He spoke then are the hope and joy which mingle with our holy fear in Advent: "I am He that liveth and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of Hell and of death."



St. Andrew's Day

Forwardness in Spiritual Enterprise. Read St. John i: 35-42

I. The characteristic which particularly distinguishes St. Andrew in the Gospel is forwardness after spiritual gains. While the other apostles were resting, on the Sabbath, he and one companion sought out St. John Baptist to learn more about Christ. And behold their magnificent reward! Jesus came upon them as they stood with His forerunner, and was revealed to them as the Lamb of God. Eager to make still more precious gains, they followed Him, and by afternoon had learned at His Feet that He was the Messiah. Whereupon they seem to have sprung up and run, each one after his brother, but Andrew was more forward,—he "*first findeth*" Simon. A period of waiting out on the lake then intervened, but when the call came again from Jesus as He walked up and down the lakeside, although our Saint was just about to cast his net, immediately he left it hanging in the water and responded. Thus he got the repu-

tation of being forward in his religion. The lad who wanted to give his loaves and fishes to Christ made St. Andrew his mediator, and the three most intimate friends of Jesus, when they desired to ask Him a hard question, took Andrew with them. (St. Mark xiii: 3 ff.)

II. We also must be forward in seeking graces for our souls. "Come boldly unto the throne of grace." There is a holy boldness which storms the Kingdom of Heaven, and takes it by force. Our Lord will often pass us by unless we constrain Him with loving violence to abide with us.

III. Two elements combine to make the Christian spirit. One is feminine modesty, lowliness, and love of obscurity. The other is a manly forwardness, initiative, enterprise. The two elements exist in wonderful harmony in our Lord. I belong to the Body of Christ, having been grafted into Him at my baptism. Let me then strive to develop the rounded character which is mine in Him.



Wednesday after the First Sunday in Advent

Returning to Our First Love.

Read Rev. ii: 1-6

I. The angel of the Church in Ephesus is believed to have been St. Timothy. Long as is the list of virtues and good works Christ attributes to him, yet He demands that the saintly bishop shall return to that first love from which he has fallen. Thirty years before, when he had but lately been consecrated for Ephesus by St. Paul, there had been a burning zeal in his heart which had since grown a little cold. Must not my Lord reproach me also with falling from my first love, enkindled at my confirmation and first com-

munion? Then let me, this Advent, find the road to yesterday.

II. Christ's rebuke to St. Timothy was not in vain, as Catholic tradition relates. Soon after this letter reached him, a great festival of Diana was celebrated at Ephesus, with its usual concomitant of fearful immorality. Forcing his way through the crowd into the very interior of the temple, St. Timothy found an impromptu pulpit, and from there preached Christ to the heathen until in their fury they tore him limb from limb. Thus he returned to his first love and it lifted him up to Jesus as a holocaust.

III. There is a terrible contrast to this conversion inferred from the existence of the Nicolaitans, a sect which was seeking to compromise between Christ and pagan idolatry and license. For it seems to have been founded by Nicolaus, one of the Seven Deacons whose ordination is recorded in Acts vi. He had been a man "of honorable report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom," but he fell away from his first love and never returned. Sweet Master, give me ears to hear the Advent call to repentance!



Thursday after the First Sunday in Advent

The Examination of Conscience.

Read Rev. iii: 1-5

I. There is special point in our Lord's warning to the Church of Sardis. She must strengthen things which remained, He said, and be watchful, for if she would not He would come on her as a thief at such an hour as she knew not. The city was built on the crest of a crag surrounded on three sides by sheer precipices, and joined to the country in its rear by a narrow bridge of land. She felt herself invulnerable.

Yet Cyrus's highlanders found, running up the face of one of her "impregnable" cliffs, a narrow cleft by which they climbed up in the darkness and scaled her weak walls. Consider, then, my soul, that we must never sleep, lulled by a false feeling of security, but "be watchful and strengthen the things which remain." Centuries after Cyrus, Antiochus Magnus once more captured the city, because again the limestone cliff had opened for them a path. After I have been delivered from my enemy I must not fail to strengthen my defences.

II. Sardis was dead while yet it claimed to be alive, and so it is with conventional Christianity. There are some who will say to our Lord at the Judgment, "We have eaten and drunk in Thy presence, and Thou hast taught in our streets." But He will say, "I tell you I know you not." Let me then examine my heart every day, and be watchful to strengthen it, that it may be real in its devotion to Christ.

III. I must make my examination of conscience with reference to the divine standard of what God meant *me* to be. Not as one of a class, a neighborhood, or a congregation, do I appear before Him, but to answer for my own soul. Let me often ask myself these two questions: What does God think of me? What do I think of God?



Friday after the First Sunday in Advent

Satan.

Read Rev. xii.

I. The devil is a personal spirit, a fallen angel. Therefore, he is likely to interpret my words and acts rightly, although he cannot know my unexpressed

thoughts. He has lived, also, since before the world was made, and having begun with superhuman intellectual powers, he has gained a vast store of knowledge about the weaknesses of us fallen men. His hatred of us is unspeakably intense, being due to his malice against God, Whom he cannot injure except through making us sin, his envy of Christians because they are to take the places he and his demons have forfeited in Heaven, and the fact that he must wreak his wrath on us intensively, because he has only a short time.

II. We behold the malice and subtlety of our arch enemy in the way he attacked the Asiatic Christians. It was not the image of Diana or Zeus which they were required to worship. That temptation would have been too gross to be effective. They were asked, in the name of patriotism, to offer only a few grains of incense before the statue of the emperor. Or, when it was necessary for a Christian to bind a contract with a heathen, he was asked to make an act of homage to the imperial image. The very guilds to which one must belong in order to trade required participation in patriotic festivities of the Cæsar cult. Frequently, when the Christian was arraigned before the Roman magistrate, all that was required of him was to say "Kurios Cæsar," or "Lord Cæsar." What a stern, uncompromising loyalty to Christ against the whole political, commercial and social world it required for the faithful to persist in saying only, "Kurios Jesus"! They held fast His Name.

III. But the triumph of Christ over the devil is absolute. It is represented in the Scriptures, by a tremendous satire. For by his agents, Satan shut the Crucified One in a tomb and sealed a great stone over

its mouth. But Christ could not be held by such barriers, and at His resurrection He laid hold on Satan, bound him, cast him into the abyss, and sealed it over him.



Saturday after the First Sunday in Advent

Walking with Christ in White.

Read Rev. iii: 4 f.

I. Several conceptions, all of which will illuminate and stimulate me, are involved in this promise, that the faithful disciple even now shall walk with Christ in white. It is first of all a reference to the snowy garments of the temple priesthood and high priest. Thus my Lord grants me participation in His own Priesthood in the measure that I sacrifice myself to God, offering Him the entire oblation of my body, my mind, and my heart.

II. Again, white was the color worn by those who followed the victorious conqueror in his triumph. The Roman general, passing beneath the Arch of Titus into the Eternal City, was followed by a long line of friends and lieutenants robed in white. My Saviour is to lead me in triumph (2 Cor. ii: 14 lit.) out of each campaign in which I battle against evil side by side with Him.

III. In the Scriptures, white apparel means festivity, victory, purity, the heavenly state of the soul, and the clarity of the resurrection body. It points, therefore, to the complete fulfillment of Christ's promise to those who defile not their garments. In the splendid robe of righteousness, which even now He wraps around my soul, I shall one day shine forth as the sun in the Kingdom of my Father. So great shall be the glistening radiance He shall give me then that by

redundance it will overflow into my resurrection body, so that what was sown in dishonor shall be raised in glory, and the image of the earthly impressed upon it shall give place to the image of the heavenly. (St. Matt. xiii: 43; 1 Cor. xv: 43-49.)



Second Sunday in Advent

Joy and Peace in Believing. Read the Epistle for the Day.

I. Consider that the joy and peace of our souls lie in believing the Catholic faith, and so abiding steadfastly in the Church of Christ. For the Church is the Kingdom of Heaven on earth. Each Christian is a prince with a guardian angel for his attendant and a countless, shining host around him. How promptly the guard springs to the defence of an earthly prince when his life is endangered! Just so, God sends His whole army of Heaven with St. Michael at its head to defend our souls in their time of need. The gates of Hell shall not prevail against that kingdom which we entered when at baptism we were born of water and the Spirit. (St. John iii: 5.)

II. And we belong also to the family of the King. "Ye are no longer strangers and pilgrims," or "tramps," "but fellow-citizens with the Saints [in the Heavenly Jerusalem] and [members] of the Household of God." Our Father gives to the wayfarers outside the Church many benefits, but He feeds us as His children seated about His board.

III. A still dearer Truth! I am a sheep in the fold of the Good Shepherd, and no man can pluck me out of His Hand. He knows me by my baptismal name, as the shepherd in our Lord's time called each one of his flock by name and it would follow Him.

And if I am weak or have been wounded by the enemy, He has a special love for me, so that He will carry me in His Bosom, on His Heart.



Monday after the Second Sunday in Advent

The Church.

Read Rev. ii: 18-25

I. Our Lord refers to Himself (Rev. iii: 14) as the "Beginning of the creation of God." This is the third in order of three titles which He assumes. He was "the Amen" when He certified to us that the nature of God is love, in the Incarnation; in His Passion He declared to Pilate that He was "the faithful and true Witness"; but when He sent the Holy Spirit down upon the apostles on Whitsunday, He was the Beginning, the Originating Source, of the *new* creation of God, the Christian Church.

II. As Jesus is the Fountainhead from which the Church springs, so does He enjoin through her His own teaching on faith and morals. "I will put upon you none other burden," He wrote to the Thyatirans, referring to the decree of the Council of Jerusalem (Acts xv: 28). "But that which ye have already, hold fast till I come." The teaching of the Catholic Church may be a burden to my natural heart, but my Lord Himself lays it upon me, and I must bear it steadfastly. Cults, like the Nicolaitans, professing to be intellectual and philosophical, will come, promising to teach me "the depths" of their teaching, but I shall know these to be "the depths of Satan" (Rev. ii: 24). I must hold fast to the simple religion believed through all the centuries by the childlike faith of Christians.

III. In still another way my Lord commands to me the teaching of His Bride. The eyes of the Lamb

are the Seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth. The Body of Christ is, therefore, indwelt by His spirit in seven-fold wisdom and power (Rev. v: 6). I must hear what the Spirit saith unto the Churches if I would truly reverence the Bride of the Lamb.



Tuesday after the Second Sunday in Advent

The Book of Life.

Read Mal. iii: 16-iv: 2

I. This is no material book. Rather it appears from a comparison of the passages in Holy Scripture about it that it is the Heart of God, in which our names were written at our baptism.

II. All the good we do is recorded in this Book; and there, too, God writes the eternal reward of the works which He has Himself wrought in us both to will and to do. When St. John speaks of "our part in the Book of Life," he means the share in our Father's love which we have gained by Christian service (Rev. xxii: 19). But mortal sin blots out our name and our merits (Rev. iii: 5), until we repent.

III. Let us conceive holy fear of thus losing our place in the love of our Heavenly Father. So shall our names be written in His Book of Remembrance ineffaceably; we shall become His peculiar treasure, and at His coming, He will spare us as a man spares his own son.



The Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary

Vocation.

Read Ps. cxxxix.

I. Mary is the Woman of Destiny. Through long ages God purposed one who would be worthy to become the mother of Christ. Immediately after

the promise of a Redeemer, Eve thought that she was chosen and that her first-born son must be the Seed Who would bruise the serpent's head. "I have got the Man from the Lord," she said. The saints of the Old Testament from the first cried out to God to send the virtuous woman whose dowry would be above rubies, even the dowry of motherhood to the Son of God. Then at last the Father fulfilled His eternal purpose by making the soul of Mary and endowing it to become, through grace, the spirit of Christ's mother.

II. This was the vocation of the Blessed Virgin. But I, also, am God's masterpiece for some special purpose. The Lord formed my spirit within me (Zech. xii: 1). He is the Father of my spirit (Heb. xii: 9). And so detailed is my vocation that God has an ideal for every day of my life: "In Thy book," says the Psalmist, "were written all my days before as yet there was one of them." (Ps. cxxxix: 16 A.V. marg.)

III. Whatever may be His special purpose for me, certainly Christ will in some way offer my heart as a sacrifice for the world. Thus He took the flesh and blood of Blessed Mary to offer it, joined to His God-head, on the Cross. I also, in union with Him, must become an oblation for the salvation of the world.



Thursday after the Second Sunday in Advent

The Names on Our Foreheads. Read Rev. iii: 12; xiv: 1-5

I. "Name" means "character," and "to write the name" on the Christian's forehead is to impress it on his mind. As we overcome in the spiritual strife, therefore, the three names are given us by Christ,

conveying to our souls the heavenly character, of God, of Christ in His Manhood, and of the new Jerusalem. Our Lord prayed, the night before Calvary, that our Heavenly Father would keep us "in [His] Name"; that is to say, in thoughts and words and acts which are godlike. (St. John xvii: 11 lit.).

II. We bear more and more, as we progress in spirituality, the character of citizens in the New Jerusalem. "Our citizenship," St. Paul says, "is in heaven" (Phil. iii: 20 lit.). The ideal held before us who yet belong to the Church Militant is that we are to live as do the blessed saints and angels, in whom God is glorified.

III. Christ's *new* name is His character as Man, consummated by His coronation, at the Right Hand of His Father, with the Crown, which was the Holy Ghost given Him then without measure. This name is writ in letters of fire on our foreheads, that each should be another Christ, an *alter-Christus*, fulfilled with the Holy Spirit of love and grace.



Friday after the Second Sunday in Advent

The Christian Feast of Tabernacles. Read Rev. vii: 9-17

I. The joyful festival which celebrated Israel's happy rest in the Holy Land after the forty years' march out of Egypt, and also signified the rest with God that remaineth unto His people, was celebrated in white robes with waving palm branches and every sign of happiness and devotion. Water was brought from Siloam in a golden pitcher while the white-robed worshipers chanted Isaiah xii: "The Lord Jehovah is my salvation. With joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation."

II. This feast, like all things in the Jewish ceremonies, was typical of Christian truth. On its octave day Jesus stood in the temple and cried out, explaining the true significance of the water brought from Siloam (St. John vii: 37 ff.). He was the "Lord Jehovah," His people's "Wells of Salvation." "If any man thirst," was His blessed invitation, "let him come unto Me and drink . . . living water."

III. Now in Rev. vii, St. John continues the Christian interpretation of this Jewish festival, especially explaining the ultimate fulfillment of the type of the booths called tabernacles, in which the people lived during the festival. He shows us the multitude of the Saints in Heaven clothed in white raiment and holding palms in their hands, for they celebrate the end of their pilgrimage. Now shall they hunger no more, neither thirst any more, nor shall the sun light on them, nor any heat, nor shall they ever again know tears, for the Lamb "that sitteth on the throne tabernacles over them" (vii: 15 lit.). And He feeds them; and ever "leads them unto fountains of waters of life." This is the perfect rest of the Church Triumphant. But yet "the power of Christ tabernacles upon us," who are still in the toils of our pilgrimage (2 Cor. xii: 9 lit.). And He shall be to us "a Tabernacle for a shadow in the day time from the heat, and for a place of refuge and for a covert from storm and rain" (Is. iv: 5 f.).



Saturday after the Second Sunday in Advent

Our True Riches.

Read Rev. iii: 18; 2 Cor. viii: 1-9

I. Three kinds of eternal wealth we are to buy of Christ with our love. The first is the gold of His passionate love, tried in the fire of the Pretorium, the

Way of the Cross, and Calvary. With this we shall be rich forever. St. Ignatius used daily to say a prayer ending: "Give me only Thy love, and Thy grace; with these I am rich enough."

II. "And white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed." Thus our Lord holds out to us the wedding garment of His righteousness, which He spun for us on the loom of His Cross, and with which, since our baptism, He has been enduing our souls.

III. "And eyesalve, that thou mayest see." Laodicea was famous as the sole source of a powder from which was made an ointment for diseased eyes. Galen ascribed the greatest virtue to this medicine, and to his words our Lord refers by using the same technical Greek word for eyesalve that was familiar to the readers of the famous Greek physician. But Christ's ointment is the balm of Gilead, and He is the Physician there. His Salve is His crucified Body and His Blood, which He lays upon our spiritual eyes, to heal our blindness, that we may see God.



Third Sunday in Advent

The Priesthood.

Read the Epistle for the Day.

I. St. Paul directs me to regard the priests of the Church as ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God. The clergy are Jesus' ambassadors, beseeching me in Christ's stead to be reconciled to my God. He would have me regard His priests as standing to me in His place. "As My Father hath sent me even so send I you," He said to them. "Whoso receiveth you, receiveth me." The ministers of my God are His stewards, commissioned to feed me, their fellow servant in His household, with the

mysterious portion of meat which I receive in the Blessed Sacrament.

II. "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves." Thus St. Paul directs me to regard the Church's priesthood as "my spiritual pastors and masters." They watch for my soul as shepherds who must give account to their Lord on His judgment throne. (Heb. xiii: 17). When my pastor renders his account of my soul, shall it be with joy or with grief?

III. Sometimes it will be the part of my spiritual director to advise or rebuke me. Let me take it as coming from my Saviour Himself. I must look to His priest as being, by grace of orders, a righteous soul, such a one indeed, as the Psalmist speaks of, when he says, "Let the righteous smite me, it shall be a kindness; let him chasten me, it shall be oil upon my head, and let not mine head refuse it" (Ps. cxli: 5 lit.).



Monday after the Third Sunday in Advent

God's Wondrous Gifts of Grace.

Read Rev. ii: 12-17

I. To us who are overcoming sin through His grace, Jesus promised the Hidden Manna. In this he refers to the Rabbinic story that the pot of manna stored in the ark of the old tabernacle had been hidden in a cave on Mount Sinai. "I will give you," He declares, "the true Hidden Manna"; that is, the grace of His sacraments, the life-sustaining power of the Sacred Humanity.

II. The white stone, which Jesus will give His loyal followers, is another metaphor of grace. In the magic incantations of the heathen, and in their mystery cults, a white stone played a great part.

God does not deal in magic, for he does not coerce the human will. The sacraments confer grace by their own power, but only upon the *receptive* soul.

III. On the white stone of these divine mysteries is a new "name written" which no one knows save he who receives it. This is the new Christ-like character which grace develops in the Christian, uniquely in each, because no one of us is like another. Among the countless crystals on the sleet-covered trees of a winter forest no two are just alike. How much more are our souls made to reflect the light of the Sun of Righteousness, each from the facets of its own God-given, eternally unique, individuality.



Tuesday after the Third Sunday in Advent

The Fruit of the Tree of Life.

Read Rev. ii: 7; xxii: 1-4

I. The fountainhead of our race in our first parents was poisoned by their sin in eating the forbidden fruit. As a consequence, there is an age-long heritage of woe. Sin, death, and sorrow were no part of God's plan for humanity. They are the result of the fall, the result begun in Adam's brain and soul by the cataclysmic effect of his first disobedience, which his children received and constantly increased as each succeeding generation added its wilful transgressions. It is this terrible, inherited insanity which alone can explain what we have seen in our highly civilized times,—whole nations of men devoting their God-given reason to inventing ever more and more effective means of destroying their fellowmen by hundreds of thousands.

II. The antidote to the baneful fruit of the Tree of Death is the Fruit of the Tree of Life, which

Christ promised in this letter to Christians facing one of the direst of the imperial persecutions. "To him that is overcoming, will I give to eat of the Tree of Life" (*now*, when It is both a reward and a source of needed strength), He said to them. And so powerful was this promise to strengthen wills and inflame hearts with love, that the Laodicean Christians, the coldest of these seven Churches, gladly accepted martyrdom in a body that they might claim its fulfillment before they were burnt.

III. Incarnate God, given to us in the Blessed Sacrament; This is the Fruit of the Tree of Life. For our sin, we were barred out from It with a flaming sword for long ages, but now in His mediatorial kingdom, the Gate of Paradise is thrown wide open. "Take," God says, "of the Tree of Life, and eat and live forever." "Whoso eateth My Flesh and drinketh My Blood hath eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day."



Wednesday after the Third Sunday in Advent

Works of Love.

Read Rev. xiv: 12-16

I. "I know thy works," Christ says in each letter, showing us that He is ever looking from Heaven to see what we will do for the honor of His Name and the good of souls. Yet He is not satisfied with mere energy, occupied perhaps with many Church institutions. Instead, He complains, when He does not find our works "perfect before God," or literally, "fulfilled [with the Holy Ghost] before God." This Church had a name that it lived, because externally it was much given to Christian deeds, yet it was dead. Thus we are taught that our devotional life must fill our activity with the Holy Spirit, or we shall be

walking "in a vain shadow and disquieting ourselves in vain."

II. But if we begin each good work with the intention of doing it for the love of God, and perhaps renew this intention now and then as we go on, we cannot be too zealous in labor for Him. Our Lord praised the Thyatiran Church because, while it had begun with good works, it had gone on increasing in them, so that its latest achievements for Him had been more than those wrought by its first love. We illuminate and comfort others far more by our Christian life than by our words. Even "Jesus began both *to do* and *teach*," being occupied thirty years in doing, and only part of three in teaching. Also He only *began*. We must continue and conclude His work.

III. In the colloquy between St. John and the Heavenly Voice, our Lord cried "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth," and the Spirit dwelling in the apostle answered "Yea, that they may rest from their labors and their works do follow them." Picture St. John in the quarries of Patmos, utterly fatigued, under a burning sun. Yet he is comforted because rest from his labors will come soon, in Heaven, where no sun nor heat shall touch him, but where each work of his love shall claim for him its eternal reward.



Thursday after the Third Sunday in Advent

Social Power of the Christian.

Read Rev. ii : 25-29

I. Here, our Lord promises irresistible power over the vast hosts of the Roman Empire to the smallest and weakest of the seven Churches. It shall rule them with a rod of iron, he decrees; that is, it shall have influence so great that it can shatter false

heathen conventions and customs. The tremendous prestige thus indicated, which even the infant Christian Church acquired, is symbolized by the fact that it took the cross, the gibbet of criminal slaves, and set it above the crown of Constantine as the most glorious ornament of his imperial state.

II. Yet our Christian power to mould society around us will be in proportion to our participation in our Lord's Sonship to His Heavenly Father. If we are to break to shivers the false pagan conceptions of the materialistic philosophy we must receive the power to do this from the Son of Man, even as He received it from His Father.

III. We are to destroy the old order only that we may replace it with a new. Like Christ, we rule not as despots but as shepherds (*pastoraliter regemus*). To teach us this He promises to give us the Morning Star, which is Himself, for He says (Rev. xxii: 16), "I am the bright and morning Star." Therefore, our Christian prestige is derived from Christ, and is to be a star of hope shining out upon the blackness of the world's night.



Friday after the Third Sunday in Advent

Tepidity.

Read Rev. iii: 14-16

I. Over the cliff facing Laodicea flowed a stream which at its fountain-head was hot, but which was luke-warm when discharged before the city. The Laodicean Church was, like the spring, tepid. It was commercially rich, but vague and cool in its religion. "Better cold like unevangelized pagans than thus lukewarm," is our Lord's terrible rebuke, "For since thou art neither cold nor hot I will spew thee out of My Mouth." The work He sought to do in their

souls by this letter was to kindle them to be "boiling hot." Am I, like the Laodiceans, still lukewarm toward Him Whose Heart is a Furnace of Love for me?

II. If a Christian loves anything in the world as much as Christ, he is tepid. These disciples to whom He wrote were complacently attached to their rich purple fabrics and their famous eyesalve. But it needs no such tempting lure as this to make us lukewarm. I can become a cold worldling over any trifles, if it takes the place in my heart which belongs to Christ.

III. In His eyes these self-satisfied, wealthy Christians were blind, naked beggars, conspicuously wretched. The words He uses were those which described the ragged mendicants who sat appealing for alms in the streets and public places of Palestine. But love has a Midas touch, by which it turns the most ordinary works that Christians do to be their heavenly, eternal riches.



Saturday after the Third Sunday in Advent

The Missionary Opportunity.

Read Rev. iii: 7-12

I. Philadelphia had been one of the temple-keepers of the Cæsar cult. But the magnificent fane its people had built for the false worship was destroyed by the earthquake, which, not long before St. John wrote, had spread desolation over that part of Asia Minor. To His Church our Lord declared that she should be His Temple, approached by a door, which He had thrown wide open to a great multitude of coming converts. For Philadelphia stood at a natural gateway to a vast, densely populated, section of country. Her opportunity like ours to-day was very great.

II. Our Lord teaches us in this same passage that He makes each loyal disciple a pillar sustaining the whole sanctuary and being sustained by it. I am supported by grace through Holy Church; I must do my part to maintain her by my alms, that she may keep the door of missions open.

III. In the letter which follows this one, our Lord said to the cold, worldly Church of Laodicea that she also had a door of missions, but it was shut. These were lukewarm Christians, too completely occupied with their glossy woolens and the pride of their wealth to care for the countryside, full of benighted, degraded heathen, to which their city, like Philadelphia, was a natural approach. And Christ said to them, and to us to-day, that it is He, represented by these unevangelized pagans, Who stands knocking at the door begging like a mendicant for someone to let Him in and feed Him with the Bread of Life.



Fourth Sunday in Advent

A Holy Death.

Read the Epistle for the Day.

I. "The Lord is at hand. Be careful for nothing." St. Paul teaches us in these brief, powerful sentences that detachment from earth and objects of natural desire comes from remembering that our Lord is at hand; that is, that we know not when He may come to fetch our souls from our death-bed. Again and again the apostle urged upon Christians his favorite warning, "Brethren the time is short." For it cools our passions and all those unruly longings which seek unlawful gratification, if we learn to think and pray about our death. "O that they were wise," God pleads with His people, "That they would consider

their latter end! How should one chase a thousand and two put ten thousand to flight!" If, in time of temptation, we would think of ourselves as lying dead to all which now threatens to fascinate and ensnare us, each Christian among us could defeat a thousand of his spiritual enemies.

II. Thus, we ought as a regular spiritual exercise, to face the thought of death. Our Lord has taught us by His example how to overcome our natural reluctance. He went into retreat at Ephraim for a week, and then went forward to His death with such determination and courage that it showed itself in His very Figure and walk. The apostles following Him were amazed and frightened, yet they agreed together that they would go up to Jerusalem and die with Him. We, too, as we journey on to the Vision of Peace, must prepare ourselves to die with Him. The priest will bring Him to us in the Sacrament of His Love. Even He, while He knelt in Gethsemane, facing His death, called an angel to Him, and we in our agony need to be fortified with the sacraments of His Church. We must be full of Jesus' strength when we fight that terrible final battle which Satan will wage with us when he sees that he is about to lose forever his chance of robbing Christ of our souls.

III. Let me resolve, then, often to plan and pray for a holy death, and in any illness to pledge those around me that I shall be plainly told when my time seems approaching. There is great spiritual danger in putting away from us the thought of our life's end. Balaam, even, desired to "die the death of the Righteous." "Let my last end be like His," he prayed. Yet he failed to make a holy death because he put away from himself the thought that his Lord might be very near him even then. "I shall see Him,

but not now; I shall behold Him, but not nigh." Thus he beguiled himself, and soon after was slain by the sword in his sins.



Monday after the Fourth Sunday in Advent

The Particular Judgment. Read Rev. iii: 2; St. Luke xix: 41-44

I. Let me remember that my soul is to be judged, and its eternal fate determined, immediately after my death. "It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment." Passing from the sick-room, where I have been surrounded by loving friends, in one instant I shall stand to be judged according to the divine standard of what my life ought to have been. God is infinitely loving, but also infinitely just, and in the Person of the Son of Man He must judge me according to the moral law written in His Heart and mine.

II. When, on Palm Sunday, He passed over the top of Olivet and came in sight of the Holy City, it was a glorious and beautiful scene in His eyes, and He loved it. It was welcoming Him, too, with holiday raiment, waving palms, and loud hosannas,—for once welcoming its King. Yet He put His Face down upon His Hands and wept with a breaking Heart. Why? Because He must pronounce the irrevocable doom of the city He loved with all divine and human love. It had beneath its outward ritual of piety a heart alien to His Own, a temple which should have been a house of prayer, and had become instead a den of robbers. More than one powerful monarch has sought to rebuild the temple since its destruction thus decreed, but all have failed utterly. So must Christ doom me, even with tears, if I am not after His Own Heart.

III. In the scales of this perfect justice, however, repentance for my sins will outweigh them all. And

if I call my Judge before me now, and learn to love Him more and more for His Own loveliness and perfection, this will be an act of contrition which will purify my whole heart in His eyes.

St. Thomas's Day

Looking Away to Jesus.

Read Heb. xi.

I. St. Thomas was lifted out of a doubt which was close to despair by beholding the risen Christ, and proving for himself that He was indeed God. "My Lord and my God," he cried out when he had seen the sacred Wounds. From that moment, St. Thomas's whole life was revolutionized. He became, it is believed, the Apostle of India and its vast heathen peoples, and persevered in his course unto a glorious martyrdom. In his experience we learn what the risen Christ means to a soul which has learned to look away from the temptation to doubt, to Him, as He waits just beyond the goal line of death, for each athlete to finish his course of faith and be received in those dear arms.

II. "Reach hither thy finger and behold My Hands," our Lord said to St. Thomas, to make his faith strong and enduring. These are the Hands upon which God has written an everlasting memorial of me, my weaknesses and needs, and my priceless value to Him, using nails for graving tools. "Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee. Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of My hands."

III. "Reach hither thy hand," Jesus says to all doubters, "and thrust it into My Side." His Heart

was pierced to admit me. Let me beseech Him to keep me safe within its dear walls, at any time when I am tempted to doubt His love.



Wednesday after the Fourth Sunday in Advent

The Second Death.

Read Rev. xx: 11-15

I. Let me reflect on this lake of fire, into which are cast all whose names are not written in the Lamb's Book of Life. My Saviour, moved by love and mercy, spread before me the picture of Dives tormented in this flame and longing for one drop of water to cool the tip of his tongue. But between him and the peace of Abraham's Bosom was fixed a great, impassable gulf. It is not so much physical suffering which thus burns the damned, but rather remorse for a life of constant rejection of Christ. The sorrowful, helpless Eyes of the Judge were full of love, and the look in His Face has burned its way down into their souls. They know that Hell was never made by God, but is the creation of devils and men, and that, however bitter their punishment is, it is divine kindness which has permitted them at all events to escape from the white light of Heaven into outer darkness.

II. Consider, my soul, that the second death is everlasting. "Their worm dieth not, and their flame is not quenched." For the damned have taken an eternal mould. They will never repent, for that would mean loving sorrow for the hurt they have dealt to Christ. Remorse they feel, but this is only self-pity for the pain they suffer. When Judas saw Christ condemned he "was remorseful" (St. Matt. xxvii: 3 lit.), and hanged himself. The Bible calls him the "son of perdition," meaning that he is the type of

the lost. He went to his *own* place, not God's place for him. Had he repented and sought Jesus along the Way of the Cross he would have been saved.

III. One mortal sin, if I persevere in it, is enough to avert my soul from God, and slay it with the second death. Dives was, no doubt, a good husband and father and citizen, but selfishness destroyed him. Judas only loved money more than Christ. Let me, then, as I look forward to the Lord's coming regard my principal fault as the very fuel of the fiery lake, and cast it out, for my own sake, and still more for the sake of my loving Redeemer.



Thursday after the Fourth Sunday in Advent

The Crown of Life.

Read Rev. ii: 8-11

I. Smyrna, to whose church Christ promised the crown of life, was surmounted by a magnificent group of public buildings. The city's pride had long pointed to this acropolis as its "diadem," when Appolonius, an orator and philosopher of the day, declared to the citizens that it was not stately marble edifices, though visible to ships far out at sea, that must constitute the city's crown, but noble statesmen and patriots, moralists and men of letters. Thus he held up for them the loftiest ideal of which classical paganism was capable. But Jesus, writing to His Church, sets the crown for which it must strive as high as Heaven. Not content with the æsthetic exaltation that we receive from poetry and art, nor yet with fine, lofty ideals of morality, we are called to seek from Christ the crown of immortal, spiritual life.

II. To gain this I must be "faithful unto death," that is, even to the point of giving up my life for

Christ. Smyrna had earned the title of "faithful" because her citizens had actually sent the clothes from their own bodies to Roman soldiers exposed to the hardships of a winter campaign. Christ asks more, and offers more. He will have *my life* that He may give me *His*.

III. For His crown is "of life," in the sense that it *is life*, the glorious life which consummates and exalts the soul, so that it becomes capable of seeing God in the Beatific Vision, face to face.



Christmas Eve

The Sun of Righteousness.

Read Mal. iv: 2-6

I. On this Vigil of Christmas let me try to realize the world's profound darkness before the Sun of Righteousness arose upon it. Moloch still claimed his many victims piled upon the brazen hands which he held out over the furnace at his feet. Greek philosophy in the person of Plato so longed to have God come near under some familiar, tangible form that it conceived of Him as becoming incarnate in the universe, although it confessed that the stars would be but rags covering the Almighty. The Jews were enslaved to the Mosaic law. It is a true picture of man's need of Christ which Browning draws in "Saul," where David, kneeling at the king's feet, has realized that his best efforts at psalmody will not drive the evil spirits from the monarch he loves better than his own life, and then it flashes upon him that God loves as well as he, and would give *His* life for Saul.

"'Tis the weakness in strength that I cry for! My flesh,
that I seek
In the Godhead! I seek and I find it. O Saul, it
shall be

A Face like my face that receives thee; a Man like
to me,
Thou shalt love and be loved by, forever: a Hand like
this hand
Shall throw open the gates of new life to thee! See the
Christ stand!"

II. Upon the midnight darkness of the world, the Sun of Righteousness arose with healing in His wings; and men who but now had been as stalled calves fattening for slaughter, went forth and leapt to greet the Light of the World. (Mal. iv: 2 lit.).

III. God gives us at Christmas the Son of His love, in Whom He has rejoiced through all eternity. Let me hear the Divine Infant saying, "I was daily His delight, rejoicing always before Him, [but now I come] rejoicing in the habitable part of His earth; and My delights are with the sons of men." (Prov. viii: 30 f.).



Christmas Day

The God-man.

Read the Gospel for the Day.

I. The Word was God and the Word was made Flesh. Thus St. John declares the simple, infinitely profound, truth of the Incarnation. As we first conceive the thought of a word in our minds and afterwards embody it in breath and sound, so the Word of God had been eternally in the Bosom of the Father before He became Incarnate in our nature. He did not empty Himself of any divine attribute, but only wrapped humanity around His Godhead, shrouding His eternal glory. He remained omniscient and omnipotent, even while he lay in the manger playing with a little straw.

II. Yet the Manhood of the Word was real and complete. Millet pictures Him as a little Boy carrying

His cut finger to the Blessed Virgin, for healing and comfort. Think of His tears: How He wept from human sympathy at the grave of His beloved Lazarus, for human grief as He sat looking upon the doomed city on the first Palm Sunday, and from dire human need in Gethsemane when He assumed upon His immaculate Heart the fearful burden of the world's sin. If one touch of nature makes the whole world kin, then by the tears of Jesus He is bound to us as our Brother by a triple tie.

III. The two natures of our Lord were united in the Incarnation for all eternity. St. Paul says that He was made a High Priest "after the law of an indissoluble life" (Heb. vii: 16. lit.). Christ will nevermore cease to be Man, and therefore a human Heart eternally beats with divine, infinite love for me.



St. Stephen's Day

Life and Immortality with Jesus. Read the Gospel for the Day.

I. In the midst of his enemies, threatened with death, St. Stephen's face became bright as an angel's. With radiant look and the bearing of a conqueror he bore his witness. Yet this was in vivid contrast to the behavior of our Lord's disciples when they fled, terror-stricken, from the soldiers in Gethsemane. The difference was due to our Lord's resurrection, ascension, and session at the Right Hand of God. He had brought "life and immortality to light." The vision He granted St. Stephen of Himself, standing on the Right Hand of God, is that which has strengthened the faith of countless martyrs. Stephen was stoned close by Calvary, and cried out with a loud voice, as his Lord had cried out upon the Cross praying that the

sin of His murderers might not be laid to their charge, in words evidently suggested by our Saviour's prayer, "Father forgive them, for they know not what they do." The martyr was able to die as his Master had done, because, like Christ's "Father into Thy Hands, I commend My Spirit," he could say, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit."

II. All classical heathen, and even the Jews, lived in what was at best dim twilight, with occasional flashes of insight into God's purpose of redemption. Sophocles voices pagan pessimism when he says, "The best is never to have been born, and the next best, to go back into darkness again as soon as possible." A Jew like Hezekiah thought of the grave as a pit. Thus he thanked God, saying, "Thou hast loved my soul out of the pit." Even the greatest saints of Judaism had only gleams of hope that God would make a way of forgiving sins, and "take" them "to glory" (Ps. lxiii : 24 lit.).

III. It was reserved for us, Christians, to know the soul as other than a swift bird flying in at the window from darkness, crossing through the narrow lighted space of a life, and then winging its flight into the darkness again. We behold a strange, beautiful radiance on the faces of the dying. We know that Jesus is there standing waiting to receive our souls in His blessed arms.



St. John's Day

Consecration of Our Will.

Read St. John xxi : 20-24

I. The saint of this day is the typical martyr in will. He was not called to shed his blood for Christ, but his suffering lay in years, lengthening into decades, of waiting until his Lord should come. Judging from

the date of his writings in the New Testament, he must have waited for Jesus until he was nearly a hundred years old. We hear his prayer rising from the quarries of Patmos: "Even so come Lord Jesus,"—so gentle and resigned, but full of longing. Let me also train my will to "tarry the Lord's leisure."

II. St. John is one of the Boanerges, Sons of Thunder, yet he became the Apostle of Love. Once he would have called down fire from Heaven on a Samaritan village which closed its gates against our Lord, and Jesus rebuked him, saying that he knew not what evil spirit he was of. But after Pentecost, when the Holy Ghost had come upon him with the Fire of Love, he was sent back with St. Peter to those same Samaritan people to confirm them. Now he was of Christ's spirit. Now he should indeed call down fire from Heaven upon them, but it would be the Fire of the Paraclete. My will must be filled with the Holy Ghost if I would be an Apostle of Love.

III. A human will in our Lord's hands becomes wonderfully powerful and gentle. St. John, before the Latin Gate, submitted to be immersed in boiling oil for his Lord's sake, so strong was the loyalty of his will. Yet in writing his pastoral letter, the Revelation, to his "little children" in Asia Minor, he put aside his fine Greek style and wrote to them in their own patois, so gentle and loving was he. Under the direction of Christ a will becomes like a steam hammer, which drives great piles into the bed of a river and yet will touch an egg-shell without fracturing it. Master, my will is mine to make it Thine. Receive it for Thine own, eternally.



The Holy Innocents' Day

Suffering for Christ's Sake. Read Col. i: 21-24; Phil. ii: 17

I. Like the child-martyrs of this day, I may in a true sense suffer in Christ's place. St. Paul, in his Roman prison, could say to the Colossians, I "rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for His Body's sake, which is the Church." "What is behind of the afflictions of Christ," or as we may paraphrase, "What is needed that the Passion of our Lord may have its full power in the lives of His people," is that the precious Stream of Life from Him should actually flow into them more and more abundantly. He, by His Cross, filled full a great ocean of grace in Himself, but this must be brought down from the Throne of the Lamb in Heaven (Rev. xxii: 1) upon the Church in the world. Now not only does He often open the flood-gates of His own Life and pour out the precious torrent upon His people, but He lets us bring it down upon whomsoever we will, by pleading our sufferings in union with His, as an intercession for their souls. This is why St. Paul rejoices over his sufferings in captivity. They would call down from the Heart of the Crucified, upon the Colossians and upon the whole Body of Christ, a great stream of the grace He had merited by His afflictions.

II. To the Philippians (ii: 17), again, the apostle wrote from captivity, 'If I be poured out upon the sacrifice and offering of your faith, I joy and rejoice.' His thought was that just as in the Temple offerings wine was poured upon the sacrifice to enrich it, so he could add to the oblation of the Philippians' good works by pouring upon them the wine of his own loving sufferings.

III. The saintly Bishop Wilkinson has said, "It is a blessed thought that our pain linked with Christ's pain, even when it appears to us to be weakening our mental thought and drying up the fountain of spiritual life, is really adding . . . a sacrificial power to our words and works."



Fifth Day in the Octave of Christmas

The Appeal of the Nativity.

Read Phil. ii: 1-8

I. "The weakness of God is stronger than man, and the foolishness of God is wiser than man." I might have resisted the revelation of the Divine Majesty and Power, but when God offers Himself to me as a little Baby, I cannot help but open my arms to Him. Once, in the early days of California, there was a lovely little boy in San Francisco, who was continually the centre of a tender, admiring circle of miners, drawn to his sweet presence from the sinful dissipation to which the city was so generally given over. He reminded these rough men of home. So did God make Himself an Infant, that He might draw our thoughts and hearts to our heavenly Home.

II. Still, He might have chosen to be born in a palace, of the blood royal; but instead, He, though in the form of God, took upon Him the form of a slave and was found in the likeness of poor, sinful man. St. Mary and St. Joseph had to pass the magnificent palace of Herod, with its countless lights and clangor of soldiers' armor, and the houses of the nobility clustering at its base, as they made their way, foot-sore and covered with dust, to the cow-stable, where God would be born in a manger, with a court of peasants and cattle. "For our sakes He became poor."

III. He passed by all the most glorious stars to reach this cold, dark earth of ours; He took not upon Him the nature of angels, but chose that of man, a little lower than the angels, that He might take us in His human arms and carry us back to Heaven with Him. Can I refuse to devote myself to this God of love?



Sixth Day in the Octave of Christmas

The Son of Man.

Read Prov. viii: 23-36

I. Christ's favorite title for Himself was "Son of Man." He came to consecrate our life by making Himself the "Son" of our race in Whom was all our human nature, sin apart. At creation He had deigned to hang out the stars in the sky and lay the foundations of the mountains. As He has told us: when God the Father appointed the foundations of the earth, 'then I was by Him as His Artificer.' But in the carpenter shop at Nazareth He learned to make yokes for the peasants' oxen. When I am at work I will remember God the Carpenter; in the midst of household worries I will recall Jesus carrying water from the spring, and at an entertainment I resolve to reflect a moment on His miracle at the wedding feast of Cana.

II. The Son of Man consecrates our human relations. There is in everyone some trace of the human perfection of Jesus. How precious it would be to us if we had, for example, the traditional veil of St. Veronica with Jesus' likeness impressed upon it! But there is some image of Christ's face in each soul, especially if it be a Christian soul.

III. He became Incarnate to consecrate me, myself. As many as receive Him, St. John declares,

to them gives He power to become the sons of God, and to be born, not of flesh and blood, but of God. I have become God's child in Baptism and increasingly since that blessed rebirth, by receiving Christ more and more. God became incarnate to pluck my soul out of the mire of sin, as if a man reached down into a muddy pool to take up from it a ring set with jewels. God sent down His only begotten Son from Heaven into the turgid waters of the world to pluck me out, with the precious jewel of my soul, to wash me in His precious Blood and set me as a signet upon His Heart. (Cant. viii : 6.)



Seventh Day in the Octave of Christmas

The Blessed Mother.

Read St. Luke i : 26-38

I. What do we not owe to Mary for her consent to become the instrument of the Incarnation, at the risk of her reputation for chastity, the dearest possession of a holy woman! For she was the voluntary, not the mechanical, means, through whom "life and immortality" were "brought to light" for us. As we trace our ruin to the disobedience of Eve, so we trace our restoration to the loving obedience of Mary.

II. We are saved through the Child-bearing of the Blessed Mother (1 Tim. ii : 15, R. V.). Before the Incarnation women were too often the slaves or toys of men. That reverence for women, which is implicit in the basis of the Church, the Family, and the State, dates its fuller development from the day when God was born of Mary. All generations call her blessed, for all generations are blessed in her.

III. To this holy Virgin we owe the gospel of the Nativity, for she alone could have revealed these

precious hidden facts to St. Luke. Scholars say they find in St. Luke i and ii "The colouring of a woman's memory and a woman's view." These chapters are our bequest from that dear heart which kept and pondered every detail of our Lord's infancy.



The Circumcision

Jesus Suffers as Our Saviour.

Read Phil. ii: 1-11

I. On this day our Lord received His holy Name, Jesus, which means "Saviour." Outwardly all was poverty, weakness and suffering. Possibly the foster father, as was customary with the very poor, performed the rite of circumcision in the Cave of the Nativity, or some bare, rented room. Yet at the naming of this tiny, eight-days' old Babe, weakly crying in His Mother's arms, all Heaven's shining hosts bowed the knee in adoration (Phil. ii: 10). For incarnate Love was then manifesting itself, through suffering, to be the Jesus, Saviour, of His poor, lost creatures.

II. One way in which His Circumcision uplifts us is by putting off from us who are in Christ the whole "body of the flesh" (Col. ii: 11). We who are in the mystical Body of Jesus are "circumcised" from sensuality and self-indulgence, "with a circumcision not made by hands, in the circumcision of Christ." Our hearts are challenged to devote themselves to Him, as we gaze upon the little Child of Bethlehem, already, on the eighth day of His life, shedding His Blood for us, and suffering out of pure devotion to our souls. "As the East catches at sunset the colors of the West, so Bethlehem is a prelude to Calvary, and even the Infant's cradle is tinged with a crimson reflection from

the Redeemer's Cross." The Circumcision is the forecast of my Lord's Passion, whereby He was lifted up to draw me unto Him.

III. To-day, God the Son unites Himself to us in a special way. He submits to the conditions of the Jewish covenant, so far as is possible for Incarnate Deity, voluntarily obeying laws made only for us fallen creatures, and accepting in His sinless Manhood suffering which was our due. Thus His union with us in the Incarnation is revealed more fully by the Circumcision.



January Second

Christian Renewal.

Read Gal. vi: 15; 2 Cor. v: 14-17

I. What God purposes for me is that I should become a "new creature" in Holy Baptism and then go onward in the life of grace, renewed in the inward man day by day. I must venture boldly, relying on my Lord, putting off the old man and going on to fresh experiences of His power in me. "How far high failure overleaps the bound of low successes!" But a venture of faith ought always to *succeed*. It is not so in human enterprises; yet men risk everything in adventures, where failure is probable. How timid I am in the enterprise to gain God, in which He assures me of success! (Phil. i: 6.) Herbert gives me the true principle to follow:

"Pitch thy behaviour low, thy projects high,
So shalt thou humble and magnanimous be.
Sink not in Spirit; who aimeth at the sky,
Shoots higher much than he that means a tree.
A grain of glory mixed with humblenesse
Cures both a fever and lethargicknesse."

II. "In Christ Jesus all things are become new." Through conversion, my outlook on life will become that of Christ. The neighbor whom I found so tiresome, or even offensive, will suddenly reveal unexpected beauties, when in Jesus I receive more of His Holy Spirit and discern Him in every soul.

III. I must follow the first call to come nearer Christ in newness of life. The successive conversions which will at last perfectly unite me to Him are like links of a golden chain, forged one within the other. Nathanael answered the first call to come and see the *Nazarene*; then he went on to discover in Christ the *Son of God*, and the *King*; then, it seems, he received Him into his house at Cana; and so finally he became an apostle. But everything depended on his response to the first invitation.



January Third

Christian Obedience. Read 1 Cor. vii: 19; Ps. cxix: 97-104

I. We must keep God's commandments out of love for Him. One of His great purposes in the Incarnation was to win this loving obedience from us through His coming in our very nature to draw our hearts and wills to Himself. "If ye love Me, keep My commandments" (St. John, xiv: 15), our Lord said to His disciples. A servant of God under the Old Covenant, one whose love had never been kindled by the Incarnation, could say, "O how love I Thy law! It is my meditation all the day. How sweet are Thy words unto my taste! yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth!" How much more ought I to practice Christian obedience, when God has come on earth to inspire devotion in my will, and to strengthen me with grace from the "fullness" of His Sacred Humanity. (St. John i: 16.)

II. My Lord teaches me that I struggle after no high but impossible ideal when I seek to make my will one with the Will of God. For I see in Christ the righteousness of God and by His Spirit I can share in the holiness of His human obedience. "He that hath seen Me," our Lord said, "Hath seen the Father." And He commands me to strive after this same harmony with God. "Be ye perfect," He said, "even as your Father in Heaven is perfect." My heart, like that of Jesus, is to beat in time with the ordered beat of the Heart of my Father in Heaven. But it can do this only as, like the Sacred Heart of the God-man, it *delights* to do God's will, having His law within itself. (Ps. xl: 8.) My baptism puts me in "tune with the Infinite," that I may keep God's commandments.

III. Therefore God asks us to make His statutes our songs in the house of our pilgrimage, "to sing hymns out of a law-book." He would have us respond to His Voice in our conscience willingly, because it draws us closer to Himself. "Be ye not as the horse or as the mule, whose trappings must be the bit and bridle, else they will not come near unto thee." "Son give me thy Heart." (Ps. xxxii: 9, R. V.; Prov. xxiii: 26.)



January Fourth

Christian Faith.

Read Gal. v: 6; vi: 7-10

I. "Faith which worketh by love." Thus Faith is a workman forging eternal treasures in us with the fire of supernatural love. Now, it is in our moments of vision that these forge-fires are kindled. Therefore we must prize such moments,—preserve them in

memory, and go back to them in times of depression and darkness.

"We cannot kindle when we will
 The fire that in the heart resides ;
 The Spirit bloweth and is still,—
 In mystery our soul abides !
 But tasks in hours of insight willed
 Can be through hours of gloom fulfilled."

II. We are not to lose heart in well doing (Gal. vi: 9; cf. Lightfoot). The Christian must be great-hearted in working for God and souls, as was his Lord, Who shed every drop of His Blood for those who reviled and hated Him, as well as for us who would be His friends. He died so soon on the Cross ! The soldiers were surprised to find him lifeless. He had died of love. His Heart was broken, but the throb of Its breaking was still God's hard labor for our souls.

III. Faith by its works of love is ever adding new, immortal glory to our souls. Our Lord's promise is, that "the righteous shall shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father." Let our faith but do its good works for the love of God, and we shall add through each of them a splendor to our souls which only sin can destroy. And thus shall they become more lustrous jewels in our Saviour's crown. (Is. lxii: 3).



Eve of the Epiphany

Faith, the Star Leading Us to Christ. Read St. John vi: 25-29

I. Faith is the prime necessity in the Christian life. It is "a necessary condition of every act of supernatural virtue." St. John ascribed to it "the

victory that hath overcome the world" (R. V.). Its power lies in the fact that it, like the Star of the Magi, brings us to Christ through all our trials and difficulties and offers to Him the precious gift of our mind, will, and affections. We can endure temptations if we see Him Who is invisible. (Heb. xi: 27). There is a glorious hymn called "St. Patrick's Breastplate" which celebrates this power of faith to discern Christ when we are in the midst of danger and to shield our hearts with the protection of His Presence:

"Christ be with me, Christ within me,
Christ behind me, Christ before me,
Christ beside me, Christ to win me,
Christ to comfort and restore me,
Christ beneath me, Christ above me,
Christ in quiet, Christ in danger,
Christ in hearts of all that love me,
Christ in mouth of friend and stranger."

II. Doubt is not the opposite of faith. The contradiction of believing is *not* believing. Doubt is possible only where there is faith, just as pain is possible only where there is life. Doubt is faith suffering assault. It is faith feverish and distressed. If our faith in God and His Truth is in this condition we must, like the Wise Men, keep steadily on our way, doing the things which we did when faith was undisturbed, saying our prayers, making our communions as regularly as we can. Above all, we must at such times fall back upon the support which is ours in God's holy Church. The Creed to which we are pledged is no new invention. It is the Faith of the ages, the "Faith of the Millions." We can well afford to affirm it and to live by it, even though our own consciousness of its truth is dimmed, and clouds of doubt come between us and the sun. "He hath

showed me His marvelous kindness in a strong city" (Ps. xxxi: 23), the city of God, the Catholic Church.

III. Consider that we can increase our faith by acting upon it; and by using our mind and will to affirm it, saying to God, 'O God, I do believe in all that Thou hast said: all that Thou hast revealed to us through the Bible and the Church.' We please our Lord very greatly by thus making "acts of faith," as when we recite the Creed in our daily prayers. For He described such spiritual efforts as work for God, saying, "This is the work of God that ye believe."



Epiphany

Christ the Light of the World.

Read Mal. iv: 2-6

I. The need of Christ is universal and age-long, and one which can be satisfied only by the revelation to man's heart of God "manifest in the Flesh," Who made that heart to find itself in Him. And this revelation of God in Christ transforms the outward world, and enables man to see God everywhere in it, and to use material nature as a means of the response he makes to his Creator. Thus Christ becomes the "Light of the world," "the bright and morning Star," the "Light to lighten the nations." Missions to the heathen date their origin from the Epiphany. "The Figure of Jesus . . . has inspired directly or indirectly every step of progress, every activity of the human soul, every work of beneficence, every branch of art." Music revealed treasures of sound unknown before, when it was made use of by St. Ambrose, by St. Gregory the Great, and in later times by St. Philip Neri through Palestrina in his oratorios, to celebrate the glory of redeeming love.

Portrait-painting received a fresh inspiration from the Face of Incarnate God. Hospitals for incurables and many another work of beneficence were unknown until God for our sake became poor and took our infirmities and bore our sicknesses. Am I living and working in the light and striving to extend the light which radiates from the Child in the arms of Mary?

II. Christ is uniquely the Light of *my* soul. He is the "true Light which lighteneth *every* man coming into the world" (St. John i: 9). In just the way it is wisest and most blessed for me to receive His Epiphany, He will manifest Himself to me. As He taught Magi, who were astrologers, by a star, the Galilean fishermen by a fishnet ("I will make you fishers of men"), and the Samaritan woman by the water of Jacob's well; as He gave St. Thomas in his doubt the very revelation he asked for, so He has His peculiar, personal appeal to me. Am I letting this dear, eager Saviour reveal Himself to me more and more? I am in the presence of the Light of life. Is the Light in me?

III. Only His manifestation can perfect my soul. It is not pleasure, or wealth, or power, that can satisfy me, but Jesus only. Our passions, faculties, powers, are disordered until Christ takes His supreme place within us.



Second Day in the Octave of Epiphany

Our Epiphany.

Read Num. xxiv: 15-19

I. Visions of Christ come through everyday surroundings. The Magi, no doubt, were led to Jesus in this way. The Jewish Dispersion had taught them Balaam's prophecy of the Star that should rise out of

Jacob and the Sceptre that should spring from Israel. Then by their science, as it seems, they discovered a "new, extraordinarily brilliant, and peculiarly colored evanescent star" (as Kepler described it on its re-appearance long after), pointing toward Bethlehem. Probably it was only after they had accepted this first guidance through a natural phenomenon that God led them by a miraculous luminary, which shone even in the day. And at the critical moment in their search they were left again to "commonplace" means,—the Church and the Bible of that day. To consider only this last,—every verse in Holy Scripture has its measure of helpfulness toward bringing us to our Lord. Had Herod's scribes read only one more phrase in the passage they quoted, they might have known who Jesus was. They stopped with, "And thou Bethlehem art not the least among the princes of Judah: for out of thee shall come a Governor that shall rule my people Israel." Therefore they never knew that "His goings forth were from eternity, from everlasting" (Mic. v: 2). Am I reading the Scriptures as God's messages to me?

II. Christ is revealed to us, also, through the Christians around us. If we love Him, we shall find Him in them. Love "delightedly believes divinities, being itself divine." Do I seek Christ in others?

III. My efforts to pierce my everyday environment must be guided by supernatural wisdom. Men called Herod "the Great"; but the Magi "mocked," or literally, "made a child" of him. They made a child of the king, and a King of the Child. And they were right, for Herod died in Machærus in the puerility of a disordered mind, and the Babe of Bethlehem is King of kings.



Third Day in the Octave of Epiphany

The Incarnation and the Blessed Sacrament. Read Isa. vii: 1-14

I. "The Lord Himself shall give you a sign: Behold, a Virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His Name Emmanuel." The Incarnation is God's call upon our faith in all that He would teach us. Once I have accepted the truth that He came in the flesh, no other miracle of His love is incredible. Thus at the Epiphany was manifested Divine love so great that it will go any length for us, even to giving us Incarnate God under the form of daily food. Bishop Boyd Carpenter says: "The Incarnation is a mystery which solves and illuminates all others."

II. How the villagers must have wondered, clustering around Joseph's lowly door, as the richly caparisoned train of camels halted before it. Why should these wealthy travellers be visiting the old Nazarene stranger,—a carpenter they say he is in his own country? But the Magi, undismayed, pass the portal and there at last see the Object of their two-years' search. To all outward appearance He is a little human baby in the arms of his peasant mother. Yet they, being God's Wise Men, prostrate themselves before Him as their God, and lay their gifts at His feet.

III. "This is the Catholic Faith, that we worship." The Wise Men took their long and toilsome journey, not because they looked for any reward which they could carry away with them, but because they sought to offer themselves and their treasures in homage to the new-born King. "We are come to worship Him." Do I count it my highest privilege to come to the Holy Eucharist, not merely for the benefits

which I receive in my communion, but that through the grace of my communion I may offer to my Sovereign all that I have and all that I am?



Sunday in the Octave of Epiphany

Wisdom Through Living the Hidden Life.

Read the Gospel for the Day; St. Luke xi: 34-36.

I. Jesus was always absorbed in God, in the midst of a hard-working life. "His whole life was spent in habitual realization of God's presence." He was always "about His Father's business," or, as it may be translated, "in His Father's House" (St. Luke ii: 41); yet He went down to Nazareth and was subject unto St. Mary and St. Joseph, in performing the tasks of a carpenter's apprentice. So He shows us that we can live the most monotonous, work-a-day life, and still abide in God. And during thirty years of this hidden life, the dwellers in Nazareth never suspected that He was more than "Jesus the Carpenter," so simple and natural was He. May I have grace to live a life hidden with Christ in God, whatever may be my outward surroundings!

II. While at St. Joseph's bench He mended the broken ox-yokes, Jesus was "in Heaven" with His Father (St. John iii: 13^b). And such a life with God is perfectly practical. Lord Addington, one of England's wisest statesmen, said that he had not for many years been entirely without the recollection of God's Presence within him. Was not this the cause of his greatness? Let me also be with God, while I do my daily tasks, that I may be "filled with wisdom."

III. For He will fill me with Divine light, if only I look to Him with simplicity of purpose, in prayer,

meditation, and recollection of His Presence. "When thine eye is single, thy whole body shall be full of light," He said (St. Luke xi: 34). That is, the pupil of the normal eye is "single," since it receives but one image at a time, and only so long as it is thus exclusive of all except the object of vision do the rays of light pass through those tiny windows of the body, and, as it were, fill our interior with illumination. In the same way, our spiritual eye must be "single" for the image of God, discerning It in His "business" and "His House," as the supereminent and all-inclusive Object of our vision, if our whole soul is to be irradiated by the holy light of His wisdom.



Fifth Day in the Octave of Epiphany

Knowledge of God in Christ.

Read Phil. iii: 7-11

I. The value of this knowledge is incomparably great. St. Paul, rich, cultivated, gifted with such great genius that he could easily have won the loftiest preferment, counted all these things but "loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus," Whom he calls "my Lord" (Phil. iii: 8). It is only here that he uses this intimate, personal expression, "*my* Lord." Let this be my ambition, to have a personal knowledge of Christ. To consider this knowledge vital food, and everything else in comparison as "refuse" to be thrown to the dogs, this is to claim Jesus as my own, and to be His friend, in some entirely unique way.

II. To know Christ thus personally is to have the same kind of knowledge as that which the Divine Father and the Eternal Son have Each of the Other in the Blessed Trinity. Incredibly as this may seem, it is a truth revealed by my Lord Himself. "I am

the Good Shepherd ; and I know Mine Own, and Mine Own know Me, even as the Father knoweth Me, and I know the Father" (St. John x : 14-15, R.V.). My unspeakably loving Master could not be satisfied to give me a less perfect insight into His Mind and Heart than one comparable to that which His Father has.

III. The knowledge of God in Christ is a foretaste of Heaven. "This is life eternal, to know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ Whom Thou hast sent." We are beginning to anticipate the joy of the Beatific Vision even here on earth. For the blessed Saints derive their perfect bliss from gaining, little by little, the knowledge of God's endless, infinite perfections. And He gives even to us of the Church Militant a partial fulfilment of His promise: "Thine eyes shall see the King in His beauty and the land of far distances,"—that is, ever-lengthening vistas of divine beauty and love. (Is. xxxiii : 17, R.V. marg.)



Sixth Day in the Octave of Epiphany

The Substance of This Knowledge.

Read Phil. iii : 10 ; St. Mark iv : 35-41

I. To "know Christ" I must take Him "as He is" into my heart, as the disciples took Him into their vessel. How did He manifest His acceptance of our limitations, the weakness of our mortality, as He lay fast asleep in the boat, worn out by days of toil, fasting, and pain ! Yet in that very weakness He was still almighty God, supreme over the forces of nature and all the powers of evil ; in a word, over "the prince of the powers of the air." I need to lay hold of this two-fold truth ; I need to enter more deeply into His perfect sympathy with my feebleness, and to know more of His

all-powerful grace and help. To "know Him" I must share His sufferings in the grace of His risen Life.

II. "That I may know Him and the power of His resurrection." This power is grace, the life-principle of souls, which in Christ burst the bands of death. Sometimes in the mountains one finds a great rock split by the trunk of an oak, which has forced its way up from the germ in an acorn in some tiny crevice of the ledge. It is the surging, swelling, all-powerful life-principle in the plant which was stronger than the granite. So the life of Christ can break through the hardness of our pride and self-will. We "know" this "power" when we claim it in sacraments, with all its triumph over sin and death.

III. "That I may know Him and the fellowship of His sufferings." In this noblest claim of Christian hearts, to share as well the Passion of their Lord as all else that is His, lies also their deepest consolation in their hour of trial. William Laud went to his martyrdom on the scaffold unflinchingly, because he had this fellowship with the Crucified. "I run," he said, "looking unto Jesus, Who for the joy that was set before Him, endured the cross, despising the shame."



Seventh Day in the Octave of Epiphany

Increase of Knowledge.

Read Phil. iii: 12-16

I. We must "forget those things which are behind" and always reach "forth unto those things which are before," pressing toward the mark 'for the prize of the upward calling of God in Christ Jesus.' St. Paul declares of himself that he is ever 'stretching himself over the course' (iii: 13) and toward the goal of knowledge. Now one practical way in which I also

must strain after the knowledge of God in Christ Jesus, is the right reception and use of my sufferings, which are sent me, often, to humble my heart, so that Christ may safely grant me fresh visions of Himself. Thus Satan was allowed to "buffet" St. Paul by a 'stake through his flesh,' so that he might receive abundant revelations without sinful elation. Misfortune, trouble, pain, may, therefore, be welcomed, as the very harbingers of a revelation.

II. "Only, whereunto we have already attained, by that same rule let us walk" (R. V.). We must use the spiritual truth we have already received. Have we adopted a rule of life? Let us keep it, not dreaming of attractive exploits for Christ, but keeping our resolutions in little things.

III. On these two conditions,—effort to know, and faithfulness to truth already revealed to us,—He has promised that 'if in anything we are at fault,' even this He will reveal unto us (iii: 15). And how I ought to long after the smallest increment of knowledge! One divine truth is enough to make eternal bliss even for the angelic mind; as in the vision of Heaven in Browning's poem :

That chief archangel stands apart from all his brother bands,
Too glad for smiling, having bent,
In angelic wonderment, o'er the depths of God and brought
Reeling thence one only thought,
To fill his own eternity.



Octave Day of the Epiphany

Meditation as a Means of Knowledge. Read Gen. xxviii: 10-15

I. Christians are in the light of divine revelation. When St. Paul says that "the Church of the living God [is] the pillar and ground of the truth" (1 Tim.

iii: 16), he may be thinking of Jacob's vision, when he lay on the *ground* at Bethel, for Jehovah appeared to him there, shining down through a rift in the heavens upon the sleeping pilgrim. The patriarch awoke to the realization that he lay in the house of God, the gate of Heaven. In this Old Testament episode, we may see a type of the Catholic Church, the "pillar and ground of the truth"; and each Christian soul should be another Jacob.

II. From that vision at Bethel the patriarch's conversion began. He had lain down a "Jacob," a "Supplanter," fleeing from his defrauded brother's wrath; but he rose with a knowledge of Jehovah which enabled him to become at last "Israel," the "Prince of God." And this is the great blessing of that knowledge of godliness which comes to us through meditation,—it brings the very Character of God before us and makes us long to be like Him. There is, therefore, no learning comparable to that we are taught in the "School of the Eternal."

III. Meditation leads us on to contemplation. In meditation God makes Himself known to us, communicating to us visions of His own greatness, goodness, love. In contemplation God takes me up into union with Himself, so that though we are still on earth yet we are already living the life of Heaven. Thus in the descending angels of Jacob's dream we may see the work of meditation, in the ascending angels the return of the soul to rest in God.



Monday after the First Sunday after Epiphany

Proving God's Will.

Read Rom. xii: 1-2; xiii: 1-4

I. When St. Paul commands us to "prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, Will of God,"

he means to urge that we should "seek in the divine will what pleases Him most and what is most perfect." He would teach us to seek out, by the practical knowledge which comes by loving obedience, the inner content, the heart, of our Father's Will. The Old Testament saints were devoted to holy obedience to a degree which is a great model to us. Abraham became an almost perfect type of the eternal Father sacrificing His Only-Begotten Son, when in unwavering submission to the divine command he stood ready to sacrifice Isaac. David, with all his sins, was the man after God's own heart, because he submitted his will, as for example, at the death of his little son. (2 Sam. xii : 15-23.) And the Psalmist could say that God's Will was the breath of life to him. 'I opened wide my mouth and panted, for I longed after Thy commandments' (Ps. cxix : 131).

II. Now one way in which I thus "prove" by practice what is the Will of God is by obedience to that Will when it is revealed through the outward circumstances of life. This is far more humiliating than submission to those severe visitations in which I can plainly see His Hand. There is a certain dignity in severe illness or bereavement, which is lacking when I have to change all my plans because of some trivial happening, which men call "chance."

III. I am in the way, again, to prove what is God's "good, and acceptable, and perfect, Will," when I obey a direction which comes through a person who is unfriendly or uncongenial. My natural disposition is, in my sense of annoyance and dislike, to forget that it does not matter in the least who is God's messenger to convey His Will to me. Yet St. Paul declares that Nero, who was already revealing himself as a monster of vice and cruelty, had as the head of

the Roman Empire received his authority from God, and was, therefore, the minister of God entitled to the obedience of Christians. Even Pontius Pilate administered a power over our blessed Lord which was delegated to him by God. "Thou couldest have no power at all against Me," Jesus said, "except it were given thee from above." (St. John xix: 11.) It is an obedience very pleasing to God when we recognize His will in the injuries inflicted upon us by the ungodly.



Tuesday after the First Sunday after Epiphany

The Mercies of God. Read 1 Cor. iii: 21-23; 2 Cor. iv: 14 f.

I. St. Paul in calling upon us to render perfect obedience to our Father adjures us, "by [His] mercies." He uses an extraordinarily strong word, and in the plural, thus "expressing the tenderest compassion as shown in manifold forms." His thought is that we will "present [our] bodies a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable unto God," as a thank-offering for the multiplied blessings which we receive from Divine Providence. For all power in Heaven and earth is in the control of our Brother in Heaven; He is the mighty God, the Lord of lords, and King of kings, and His dominion is such that the whole earth is "full of His mercy." All the power of the everlasting Arms, and all the love of the Heart of God, are pledged in the interest of my salvation. He loves *me*. (Gal. ii: 20.)

II. The manifoldness of God's mercy appears more clearly if we think of some forms in which it is revealed. Human inventions, if beneficent to men, can be traced to Him. They do not proceed from human

genius as their source, for 'we are not sufficient of ourselves to think anything as of ourselves but our sufficiency is of God.' (2 Cor. iii: 5). Morse rightly indicated the Inventor of the telegraph when he sent over it as its first message the words, "What hath God wrought!" Through nature, also, is God's providence revealed. "The invisible things of Him since the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead." The abundant crops which year after year we gather in are witnesses to God, "filling our hearts with food and gladness" (Rom. i: 20).

III. But the divine providence revealed through human genius and fruitful seasons is ultimately for the good of our souls, rather than for these perishing bodies. It is infinitely more important that one heart should receive His warning message through conscience than that the news of the world should be sent by wireless telegraphy across the seas. The truth, incredible as it may seem, is declared in Scripture that the human race is the central thing in the universe, round which the inventions of men and the great movements of nations are so many whirling spokes, and the stars themselves but a rim to speed us onward to God. 'All things work together for good to them that love God' (Rom. viii: 28). "All things are for [our] sakes." Or if we take St. Paul's summary of all possible blessings which Divine Providence can bestow, 'All things are ours, whether great saints and apostles, the world, life, death, things present, or things to come,—all are ours and we are Christ's and Christ is God's.'



**Wednesday after the First Sunday
after Epiphany****Divine Help in Our Troubles.**

Read St. John xvi: 29-33

I. Christ is all-powerful and He loves my soul infinitely, yet I am tried and tempted. Let me consider, lest I should be disturbed by this seeming contradiction, how the providence of Jesus manifests itself in my troubles. For He has not disguised from me the fact that to serve Him means suffering. "In the world," He declared, "ye shall have tribulation"; but at the same time He promises that through the comfort of the blessed Gospel we shall have peace in Him. Even grave misfortune, calamity, disaster of various kinds, are permitted to come upon me through His love. One of the modern farming methods illustrates this strange way of divine love with souls. Our agriculturists farm with dynamite, laying the charge beneath the surface of the soil and breaking up the hard-pan by the tremendous explosive so that the grain can strike its roots deeper. Trouble in this same way is meant to break up our selfishness, that our Lord's life may strike its roots deep into our hearts.

II. Temptation has a similar blessed purpose for me. It is inevitable; and the more definitely and devotedly I acknowledge Christ as my Master the more certain I am to be the object of Satan's attacks. But not the slightest trial of this sort can come to me except in the exact measure permitted by Divine Wisdom; and so that it shall be always for my good. "Blessed," says St. James, "is the man that endureth temptation: for when he hath been proved he shall receive the crown of life." In this sense that saying is true: "Who flees temptation, flees eternal life."

III. So I might examine every kind of suffering

and I should find in it divine providence, evident to my spiritual discernment. St. Chrysostom, after being dragged by his enemies through long marches, allowed but scanty food and little rest, and, worst of all, denied the sacraments, and this with the express purpose of killing him, when at last, after three months of this fearful suffering, he came to die, said: "Glory be to God for *all* things." And "here is the patience and the faith of the saints" among whom I am called to take my place.



Thursday after the First Sunday after Epiphany

To Have Our Own Way is Perilous. Read Isa. xiv: 12-17

I. Our own will can guide us only to destruction. From the first act of self-will, by which Lucifer and his rebel angels refused to serve God, down to the last disobedience, the proclivity of man's heart is, on the whole, towards evil. The penalty for disobedience appears in Holy Scripture in the parallel column, as it were, with the record of the sin. Our first parents refused to believe God and serve Him. They rejected His loving warning in reliance on the promise of the father of lies, "Thou shalt not surely die." But in the very next chapter we read the result of their self-will, how one after another they and their descendants died even as God had said. The passage is like the tolling of a great deep-toned bell, "and he died,—and he died,—and he died."

II. St. Polycarp, one of the earliest Christian martyrs, may teach us what blessed protection from the devil is ours through obedience to God, even when His protection allows bitter suffering to be inflicted upon us. With full consent the saint gave himself up to be burned to death for Christ, so that

his enemies saw that he need not be bound to a stake ; and when the fire was lighted, so the beautiful tradition relates, the flames divided at his feet and left him untouched. We also are to serve our Lord lovingly and without reluctance even amid flames of troubles and sorrow and temptations. Thus shall those fires of Satan's kindling have no power to hurt us.

III. God is building the wall of the new Jerusalem, and the "lively" stones are souls which have learned to have no will but His. The cement is the Precious Blood. The corner-stone is Jesus Christ. If I would be fitted for my place in that eternal fabric, I must be content to be chipped and chiselled by divine love until I am formed for the city which hath foundations, whose Builder and Maker is God. (Heb. xi : 10.)



Friday after the First Sunday after Epiphany

The Gifts of the Magi.

Read Rev. viii : 1-4

I. Christ has made us kings unto God. (Rev. i : 6.) To serve Him is to reign. Scientists have discovered that the way to rule nature is first to obey her, or, to speak more truly, to obey the Mind Whose thoughts she expresses ; and in the same way we reign with God by submitting ourselves to Him Who holds all power in Heaven and earth. We sit with Him in His throne by overcoming our rebellious lower will and making it one with the will of the King of kings (Rev. iii : 21), for thus willing only what He wills we may always have our least desire gratified.

II. Now there are three gifts which the followers of Jesus must bring him. The first is the gold of our

love. "Son," He says, "give Me thy heart." But then, fearing that our pride may resist this divine command, He eagerly tries to win our love. 'If you will set your love upon Me,' He promises, 'I will deliver you, I will set you up on high; with everlasting life I will satisfy you, and show you my salvation' (Ps. xci). Still our selfish heart may refuse to surrender itself even for a place on God's throne. Therefore, our Saviour comes as a mendicant to it crying: "Behold I stand at the door and knock; if any man hear My voice, and open the door, I will come in to him and will sup with him" (at the banquet of His love).

III. The second gift we make to Christ is the incense of our prayer. With this the censer in the celestial temple is filled, and its sweet odors ascend before the throne of God. Our third gift is the myrrh of our self-mortification. For in the world we never pass beyond the duty of showing forth the cross in our lives. We must offer to our Lord the bitterness of sorrow for sin,—our own sins and the sins of all the world. And we must bring to Him the myrrh of mortification of our outward senses and of our wayward wills.



Saturday after the First Sunday after Epiphany

Finding Jesus in Our Hearts. Read Eph. iii: 17-19; Col. i: 25-29

I. Jesus as God is in our hearts. 'Know ye not that Jesus Christ is in you?' St. Paul asks us (2 Cor. xiii: 5). He was greatly devoted to this gracious Presence, and often speaks of it. He delighted in the divine promise to dwell in us and walk in us (2 Cor. vi: 16). All past, present, and future mercies of God were summed up for him in the indwelling Jesus. 'The

mystery hid from the ages and generations of the Old Testament saints,' he cries to us, 'but now at last made known to you as at the present the concentrated riches of divine glory, and for the future the hope of eternal glory in Heaven,—this is Christ in you.'

II. Of what unspeakable value this Presence may be to me! The realization of the indwelling Christ has power to sweeten and strengthen my whole life. Let me consider one way in which recollection of it will help me. My evil tendencies may be fostered, not only by my yielding to them, but by my involuntary wandering thoughts, by mere day-dreaming. My only remedy is to fill my soul with Christ, letting Him dwell within me, until I am *rooted* and *grounded* in *love*,—filled, that is, with all the fulness of God, Who is Love (Eph. iii: 17 ff.).

III. This Presence is my supreme happiness. By it I am consoled in sorrows, for though I lose all else, I still have Christ, and "Christ is all." He, dwelling within me, is my Joy of joys. 'In Whom, though now I see Him not, yet believing, I rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory' (1 St. Pet. i: 8).



The Second Sunday after Epiphany

Christ in Our Spiritual Life. Read the Gospel for the Day.

I. Do we sometimes wonder because, even after we have long persevered in our prayers, or struggles to overcome sin, our efforts seem to be fruitless? Christ's time to turn the water into wine has not yet come. But just as He wrought the miracle at Cana in an instant, so when the moment He has planned for in His providence for us arrives, the answer to prayer, or the first victory over our temptation, will be granted us.

II. We must coöperate with Christ by enduring the trials of our faith, if we want Him to do "many mighty works" for us. These servants had been sent to the Blessed Virgin to say that the wine was exhausted, and, at her direction, they turned from her to our Lord for help. But His order when it came must have seemed utterly inadequate. Why carry many gallons of water to fill the empty jars? Yet "they filled them *up to the brim.*" Their reward for this triumph of their faith in Christ was that, in contrast with the ignorance of the governor of the feast, they knew whence the good wine came, and, it may be, became our Lord's disciples. So is the blind obedience of our faith often rewarded by some manifestation of Christ's transforming power in our spiritual lives which makes us more than ever before His disciples.

III. Jesus keeps the good wine until the last. Only when we have exhausted our limited human strength will our Lord come to our rescue with His supernatural wine of grace, just as He waited until the pitchers of the bridegroom were empty. My extremity will often be His opportunity. The rabbis used to say: "When the tale of bricks is doubled, Moses is born." The soul which is faithful to the very end of its trial will find that God has given it new strength to meet the pressure, or, it may even be that a new virtue has been born of its necessity and the love for it of its heavenly Bridegroom.



Monday after the Second Sunday after Epiphany

"Thou Hast Kept the Good Wine."

Read Heb. xii: 6-11

I. This was the "beginning" of Christ's miracles. For thirty years He had lived in the home of the

Blessed Virgin, as her Son, subject to her slightest command, and although they were years of poverty and hardship, she had never asked for any alleviation of her lot by His divine power. Yet she believed in it absolutely. For see with what perfect assurance she asked her Son to fill the wine-jars, when He could do this only by a miracle.

II. We also must be content, having Jesus always with us in our hearts, as she had Him at Nazareth, to wait for the gift of the good wine until the last. For there are two feasts in life, as St. Bernard used to tell his monks, one set by the world, the other by Christ. At the world's table the wine is very delightful at first, but as life wears on, the senses become dulled and whilom pleasures pall. Men have well drunk, so Satan brings on the wine which is worse. The end is old age turning away from the squandered feast, and death coming in to put out the lights.

III. How good in contrast with this is the feast of Christ! At first, indeed, He gives us the water of self-denial, but His Holy Spirit will presently turn this into the sweet wine of habitual virtues. "No chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them that are exercised thereby." In this life, St. Paul means, we enjoy the rich clusters growing from the root of painful earlier self-discipline. And the end is drinking the new wine of eternal life with Christ in the Kingdom of His Father.



Tuesday after the Second Sunday after Epiphany

The Miracle of Cana Repeated in ~~the~~ Read Ps. cxxviii.

I. It seems to have been the burden of Christ and His apostles which overtaxed the hospitality of these

young married folk. True, they had invited our Lord: "Both Jesus was called and His disciples to the marriage." But they seem not to have counted the cost of entertaining Him. Yet the very need He created by His Presence was the occasion of His supplying more and better wine. Now at my baptism, and at each communion, Jesus comes to a wedding in this house of my body, where, however, He is the Bridegroom and my heart is the bride. Often I shall feel the costly burden of keeping Him, but let me remember that His Presence will bring me the good wine at the last. (Ps. cxviii: 3^a.)

II. The miracle Christ works at His own wedding with my heart is far greater than that at Cana, for by it He changes the water of my selfishness into the wine of love for God. Yet He does this, not instantly, but gradually, by a long series of inspirations and graces. The vintage of my heart is produced more according to the "miracle" of wine-making in our vineyards, when the water is taken up by the roots of the vine, and gradually through weeks of sunshine and rain is changed into the juice of the grape and becomes wine.

III. Christ is glorified in me by the spiritual transformation He effects. As at Cana, "He manifested forth His glory, and His disciples believed on Him," so shall it be through me, in my home, and my parish, when He shall have wrought His miracle in me; my life shall justify His proud boast: "I am glorified in [Mine]." As on the part of His enemies He is blasphemed, so on my part He shall be glorified. (1 St. Pet. iv: 14.)



Wednesday after the Second Sunday after Epiphany

Love of Christ Without Dissimulation. Read Rom. xii: 9-13

I. The miracle of change which my Lord works in me purifies my love more and more from dissimulation. He makes only the *best* wine; He would not mingle His with the bridegroom's inferior vintage; so He would have me full of supernatural love, unmixed with human passion. And I have a great incentive to utter self-devotion to Him, when I consider that just so far as I am sinful, I shall sympathize with evil. In the measure that I fail to love my Lord perfectly, without dissimulation, I shall be forced to be His enemy. Then, help me, sweet Master, to *abhor* that which is evil and *cleave* to that which is good!

II. As long as the grapevine is half dragging on the earth, it will never produce worthy fruit, no matter how much rain and sunshine our Lord pours upon it. It must be painfully trained up, set straight and fastened to the wires. In the same way our love needs to be disciplined by a measure of hardness in our devotional life, of obedience to our rule, and of faithfulness in prayer and abstinence.

III. Each spring the farmer "purges" away the new buds and branches from the vine until nothing is left but the stem and two arms stretching out, cruciform, along the wires. Jesus used often to see the rich bunches growing around these crosses, and from them he draws a great spiritual lesson: "I am the [whole] Vine," He says, "ye are the branches. Every branch [in Me] that beareth good fruit [My Father] purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit." Thus it is by a cross that we are purged to bear more and sweeter fruit as we abide in the true Vine.

Thursday after the Second Sunday after Epiphany

The Good Wine Gained Through the Discipline of Prayer.

Read Gen. xxxii: 24-32

I. Jacob strove with God and would not let Him go without His first bestowing the divine blessing; and in that night the patriarch received a new "name," or "character," for character is the meaning in Holy Scripture of a "name" Divinely given. He became "Israel," a "Prince with God." This is the prize of my soul's tremendous wrestling with Jehovah in prayer,—a new character more like His, and with it the power of a "Prince with God." With the arms of my supplication I will embrace Him, and will not let Him go until the new day break, and I have obtained this ineffable blessing.

II. Prolonged prayer ought to preface any meeting with men which we fear may be fraught with danger. Jacob knew that on the morrow he must meet his fierce brother Esau, and what disaster that encounter boded he could not foresee. Therefore all night he wrestled with this mysterious "Angel" to obtain His blessing, because he must first prevail with Jehovah, before he dared face his brother. At length the gracious answer came: "As a prince hast thou power with God, and with men also," referring especially to Esau, "and hast prevailed" (xxxii: 28). And when the next day Israel met Esau, his erstwhile hostile brother, he had become converted into a friend.

III. The sinew in Israel's thigh was "strained" by the touch of Jehovah, at the very moment of the blessing. This was given him, as St. Paul received his 'stake through the flesh,' to save him from

yielding to pride over the divine favor he had obtained. Thus personal suffering, following some struggle with God in prayer, is almost a certain sign that we have received our blessing, and our Lord means to save us from the vain thought that we gained it by our own natural merit. "Whom I love," He assures us, "I rebuke and chasten."



Friday after the Second Sunday after Epiphany

The Lessons of Faith. Read St. Mark iv: 36-41; vi: 47 ff.

I. Twice the disciples were all but shipwrecked on the Sea of Galilee. The first time our Lord was with them, although fast asleep in the stern of the boat, and it was yet day. The great waves almost engulfed the little vessel, it is true, but in their desperation, they had one infallible resource,—Christ there, visibly present with them. And immediately at their call, He did arise and rebuke the forces of evil,—not the storm-winds but the personal powers behind them, with his words "Peace, be still." At once the sea was calm and the sun shone brightly again. Do I really believe that He has power to say "Peace, be still" to all the hosts of my spiritual enemies?

II. St. Mark recounts another storm which contrasts with this in that it involved a greater trial of faith (vi: 47 ff.). This second time our Lord waited until the fourth watch, which was nearly dawn, before he came to the rescue, although all through the night He had seen them toiling in the sea; and even then He came in a way that terrified them, for He was walking upon the waves. Moreover, He made as if He would have passed, leaving them in their distress. But when they cried out, at once He came to them, and

speeded their boat to its haven. I ought never be surprised or distressed if after a severe lesson in faith an even greater trial follows, for so I may learn by experience always to cry out and claim my Lord's ever-present love and power.

III. St. Peter advanced to Christ over the billows. As long as he kept his eyes upon his Lord, he walked safely. But the moment his glance wandered to the storm and himself he began to sink. During my trials of faith I shall gain great confidence and steadfastness, if I run looking away to Jesus, Who is the Author and Finisher of my life of faith. (Heb. xii: 2.)

Saturday after the Second Sunday
after Epiphany

Spiritual Discipline.

Read Ps. cxxxii.

I. St. Mary Magdalene, weeping by the empty tomb, while her Lord stood all the time close by though unseen, is a perfect picture of a soul in spiritual desolation. The divine purpose of this discipline appeared when our Lord presently revealed Himself to her, and she fell down and clasped His Feet; for He commanded her not to "cling to" Him, as the Greek is correctly interpreted to mean, because He had not yet ascended to His Father. He must first spiritualize her love by depriving her of sensible union with Him, before she could be allowed to hold Him fast forever. We also, often, in the same way, are deprived of the feeling of His Presence that we may learn to cleave to Him with our will, and to love Him for His own loveliness, rather than for any gift, even that of sensible union with Him.

II. The writer of our psalm for reading to-day

fulfilled well this divine purpose of spiritual discipline. He had received, it seems, great blessings of fervor and consolation, which he thought of as milk drawn from the Divine Breast. But, afterwards, these were withdrawn from him, whereupon he submitted himself patiently to the discipline of spiritual dryness. 'I have refrained and quieted my soul,' he declares, 'as a weaned child on the breast of its mother.' Weaned from the sweet milk, he would still lie contentedly on God's Bosom. And behold his gain in love! As, when a child is weaned, it begins to love the mother for herself, so he is able now to make his act of perfect love, which is the love of God for Himself alone.

III. When I am sorely tried by this discipline I will reflect that Jesus sounded the profoundest depths of dereliction, as is shown by the Fourth Word on the Cross. He *felt* as if His Father had forsaken Him, because, for our sins which He bore, He was deprived of the consolation of His Father's Presence. Thus He knows far more than all that I can suffer of this deepest spiritual affliction.



The Third Sunday after Epiphany

Overcoming Evil with Good. Read the Epistle for the Day.

I. This good, which is to overcome evil, is not in me, of myself, for "in me, that is in my flesh," my natural self, "dwelleth no good thing." Indeed there is a certain disposition in me to delight in evil, as Satan does, for example when I feel a vainglorious pleasure in the faults of others. But the good which overcomes evil is love constraining us. "If ye love Me [ye will] keep My commandments," our Lord said. Kingsley could explain a whole life spent in

ennobling effort by saying, "I had a Friend." Plato had long before declared that "by a growth of God in the heart we have a distaste for sin," and God is love.

II. God became incarnate that he might win our hearts. How then, my soul, may you unceasingly increase your love of Jesus? (a) By meditating on the Scriptures. St. Anthony the Hermit received with perfect indifference complimentary letters from two emperors. He considered that they were mere men; but, said he, "Admire with me the graciousness of the King of kings, Who has written us the letter of the Scriptures." (b) Often recall Christ's personal, peculiar, love for *you*, so great as to make Him give His life for you. "He tasted death for every man." (c) Make your communion so that He may touch you, poor sinful soul, as he touched the leper in the Gospel to-day.

III. We see among Christ's earliest disciples how greater love for Him produces conquests over selfishness towards others. Thus we read of the apostles quarreling over the places of honor about Jesus, but the women, absorbed in their devotion to Him, kept perfect peace with one another.



Monday after the Third Sunday after Epiphany

The Power of Love.

Read Song of Songs viii: 1-7

I. Love is the one force which has power to make us desire God above all things. "Love is strong as death, and zealous with the tenacity of the grave in holding fast the Beloved" (to paraphrase Solomon's words). In the end death will relax the grip of my fingers so that all will slip from them except the Hand

of Christ. So now, even amid the allurements of the world of sense, love, being strong as death, will loose my clinging grasp of things, to fasten it upon my Beloved with a hold which will last forever.

II. This virtue so fortifies me to endure that the yoke of Christ becomes easy, and His burden light. While I bear it, I find rest to my soul; being the slave of Christ, I enjoy the glorious liberty of the children of God. Through love the saints having reached the rest which remaineth for the people of God, yet rest not day or night from their perfect service. Christ, though He was God, yet for love's sake took upon Him the form of a servant, and became obedient unto death. By divine charity I too may serve and be at rest; I can obey, like an *alter Christus*; I am able to be perfect as my Father in Heaven is perfect.

III. The exercise of love for Christ develops and strengthens this divine virtue. Thus the Blessed Magdalene at her conversion brought Him an alabaster box of myrrh and poured it on His Feet (St. Luke vii: 37). Afterwards, however, she came with a pound of precious spikenard, and broke the box and poured its costly contents on His Head and Feet.



Tuesday after the Third Sunday after Epiphany

The Vision of Christ.

Read Acts xxvi: 9-19

I. In the vision on the Damascus Road Christ's glory, above the radiance of the sun, struck Saul down from his horse and blinded him, but it was not this which converted his heart and made him a saint. The subject of his meditations in the three years' retreat in Arabia was not the majesty of the King,

but his vision of the Sacred Wounds of his crucified Redeemer. This it was which strengthened St. Paul with responsive love to crucify self for Christ. Let me also look up to my Saviour, that I may now begin to live my life afresh 'in the faith of the Son of God, Who loved *me* and gave Himself for *me*' (Gal. ii: 20).

II. As with St. Paul, any progress in sanctity that I can make will depend upon the clearness of my vision of Christ and His power in my life. The Apostle harking back to Moses' visions of Jehovah on the mount, from which his unveiled face each time retained *temporarily* the reflection of the divine glory, assures us that "we *all*, with unveiled face reflecting as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are *changed* into the *same Image*, from glory to glory" (2 Cor. iii: 18, R.V.). The radiance gradually faded from the face of Moses, but the glory of Jehovah shining into us as we look up to Christ and our mirroring of Him in our actions change us *permanently* into His very Image and from glory to glory.

III. I become effective in bringing others to Jesus, in proportion as they see His beauty reflected in my life. St. Stephen had looked up to Him and so, with a face like the face of an angel, from the reflected glory, had been able to imitate his Master and die praying for his murderers. And this holy death of the martyr was the goad which was pricking the heart of Saul on the Damascus Road.



Wednesday after the Third Sunday after Epiphany

The Discipline of St. Paul.

Read Gal. i: 13-24

I. St. Paul, in this letter to the Galatians, says of the divine purpose for his life: 'It pleased God, Who

set me apart before my birth, and called me [on the Damascus Road], to reveal His Son in me, that I might carry Him as my Gospel among the Gentiles.' Let his experience enlighten us as to our own vocation. In the way of the perfect fulfillment of God's pre-destinating will for St. Paul stood his handicap of an impetuous, undisciplined temper.

II. Long was the discipline of mortification which Christ gave this chosen soul to cure him of his besetting fault. After the three preparatory years of his retreat in Arabia he returned to preach a great mission in Damascus; but the ignominious *dénouement* was to be let down out of a window, over a wall, in a basket, at night! He must pass more years of retirement at Tarsus before he was fit to be separated for the work to which the Holy Ghost had called him. (Acts xiii: 2.) Yet even then the greatest ambition of his life, that he might preach the Gospel at Rome, was not vouchsafed him until he was an old man, bowed and broken, and then he was sent, not to the Forum for his pulpit, but to a prison room.

III. The result of his discipline was twofold: (a) St. Paul, deserted in his prison by the Roman Church, had learned to be abased, or to abound, to be full or to be hungry. (Phil. iv: 12.) He had become perfectly plastic in Christ's Hands. (b) Men glorified God in him. (Gal. i: 24.)



Thursday after the Third Sunday after Epiphany

St. Paul's Weakness and Strength.

Read Gal. iv: 11-15

I. Christ's great missionary to the Roman Empire seems to have been a half-blind man, with eyes blurred by some disfiguring disease. The brethren "conducted Paul"; they "brought him down to Cæsarea." The

suggestion is always of someone leading him. "See with how large letters I have written unto you with mine own hand" (R.V.), he wrote to the Galatians, suggesting chirography magnified to suit those weak eyes, which, indeed, had so swayed the pity of his converts that they had longed to pluck out their own eyes and give them to him. Although he stood within a few rods of the high priest, he "wist not that it was the high priest," since he saw only a "whited wall." And not only was St. Paul thus blinded, but his 'stake through the body' seems to have been epilepsy, a frequent concomitant of the ophthalmia with which he was afflicted. He bare in his body the putting to death of the Lord Jesus, he declared; he died daily, he was crucified. Thus he tells of some terrible illness. Now add to his ophthalmia and epilepsy that he, the greatest of all preachers of Christ, was of 'bodily presence weak, and speech contemptible' (2 Cor. x: 10).

II. But Christ within him was his power. He evangelized the Galatians during an attack of his illness. Yet these people were full of the Greek idea that any revelation from God must come through an Apollo; and St. Paul lay there, as we may picture him, his eyes almost sightless, his body suffering from his repulsive disease. "Your temptation was in my flesh," he reminded them in his epistle (iv: 14; cf. R. V.). Yet they received him as an angel of God; yes, even as the Lord Jesus, Who shone through him.

III. When he had three times prayed that Christ would take away the "stake," our Lord answered: "My grace is sufficient for thee, for My strength is made perfect in [thy] weakness." It was in this grace that afterwards he labored more abundantly than all the apostles. Why am I weak and ineffective

in the service of my Master? Has His grace lost its power? I am not really weak when I feel weak, or strong because I feel strong, for the great Apostle says, "When I am weak, then am I strong."



Friday after the Third Sunday after Epiphany

St. Paul's Greatest Work.

Read Phil. i: 12-19

I. The great Apostle of the Gentiles was sent to peoples as various as Celts (the Galatians) and Greeks, Jews of the Dispersion and Romans. It was Christ in him Who made the narrow Pharisee Saul universal enough to appeal to the whole world :

"Ay, for this Paul, a scorn and a despising,
Weak as you know him, and the wretch you see,
Even in these eyes shall you behold Him rising,
Strength in infirmities and Christ in me."

For Jesus is universal,—He does "all things well," through us, as in His own ministry. His grace is "manifold," or, literally, "many-coloured," and we, good stewards of it, need only be true prisms for it to shine through us, crimson or violet, grave or gay, according to the need of our neighbors. (1 St. Peter iv: 10.)

II. We see in St. Paul's life after his conversion how universally effective he had become. With Aquila, the devout Jew, he found a point of contact in his trade of tent making; and as they stitched away together, the Saint showed his companion how Jesus had fulfilled the Messianic prophecies. With Apollos, on the other hand, he had to deal with one versed in the subtleties of the Greek schools of philosophy, and the Divine Wisdom within the Apostle taught him how

to suggest in Plato and Aristotle their pathetic need of Christ. It was in this way that he became "all things to all men."

III. Yet the crowning achievement of St. Paul's life was waiting for him at Rome, not in the cosmopolitan crowds in the streets, but in the stillness of his prison. Day by day he spoke of Christ to the soldier chained to him by wrist and ankle. Thus he could say, "My bonds became manifest in Christ throughout the whole Prætorian guard and to all the rest" (R.V.). When Cæsar awoke to the presence of the Apostle in the city he found his palace Christian. *My greatest work for Christ is to live so that I may convert the one next to me.*



Saturday after the Third Sunday after Epiphany

Union with God through Humility.

Read 2 Cor. xii : 1-5

I. St. Paul was the greatest of the mystics, and in the five verses of our passage for reading he has outlined his whole experience. Now in this brief epitome the astonishing fact is that he concentrates our attention, not on his being caught up into Heaven, but on his self-emptying, which was but the preparation for his mystical union with Christ. He declares that so oblivious of self did he become through his absorption in God, that he cannot tell whether his soul was in his body and simply raised out of itself to a higher plane of charity, or whether it was rapt out of him, as his body lay unconscious and still. In his ecstasy he was carried beyond the third Heaven into the very presence of God, yet still it is "such a one," for the Saint had become, as to *himself*, a nonentity. He actually distinguishes between himself and the soul thus translated into Paradise, saying, "Of such a one will I

glory, yet of myself will I not glory." And the reason the inspired Apostle teaches us with such remarkable insistence the emptying of self is because we, as Christians, are bound to seek it, since it is the way to union with God, while the special favors granted to St. Paul, of rhapsody and ecstasy, not to say translation, will probably never be ours.

II. Compared with this blessed union, what do *things* count? "What are gold and silver but red and white earth? What are gems but stones of the earth? What is silk but the webs of worms?" Even spiritual consolations we can sacrifice without regret if the fact is clear to us that our Lord withholds them in order to draw us to a closer union with Himself. 'The Lord thy God in the midst of thee is mighty; He will save thee, He will rejoice over thee with joy; He will be silent in His love; He will joy over thee with singing' (Zeph. iii: 17). Thus the very cessation of our Lord's endearments to our soul, His "silences," are meant in love, that we may love Him for Himself rather than with that lower degree of charity, which attaches itself to the spiritual consolations He gives.

III. St. Paul was drawn close to our Lord through that affliction of his which he describes as the 'stake through his flesh.' "Thrice," he says, 'I invoked the Lord, that it might depart from me.' He does not use here the word "supplicated," or "besought," because he has become very bold with the Crucified, calling upon Him more as a Brother, so great was the sympathy, engendered by St. Paul's suffering, between him and his Divine Friend. For "they who suffer must be very close to God."



The Fourth Sunday after Epiphany

Spiritual Welfare Preëminent.

Read St. Mark v: 1-20

I. When Christ and the Twelve had landed on the Gergesene coast, at the base of a cliff pitted with cave-sepulchres, there came rushing towards them a man, naked, lunatic and possessed. The ends of broken chains hung from his wrists and ankles. His face and his naked, wounded body indicated a condition of violent mania. Now it was not to the *body* or the *mind* of this unfortunate that the Lord applied His remedy. He cast out the powers of evil from the unhappy *soul*. He cured the poor victim spiritually, and thereupon he was found clothed and in his right mind. A moment before his God-given individuality had been submerged beneath the disorder caused by the myriad demons in his soul, so that the only name he could give was "Legion." But now he had come to himself, at Jesus' feet. My great object, when I seek to help anyone, must be to bring his *soul* to itself by bringing it to Christ.

II. The restored man prayed eagerly to follow Jesus. He feared that if he ever lost sight of his Saviour he might come again under the dominion of the demons, even though he had seen the swine into which they had entered engulfed in the sea. But Jesus, in love, compelled him to remain behind, that he might learn to walk by faith. He was to find the divine power all-sufficient, though his Lord was no longer visibly present with him.

III. Therefore he was sent home to tell his friends about the mighty gift of love and compassion he had received. And he published it through the whole country, with wonderful results. For these people, who had prayed Jesus to depart out of their borders, when

He came again lined His path with their sick, and prayed of Him if it might be but the healing touch of His garment. What a difference in their prayer, wrought by the labor of one convert! To live a truly spiritual life is my most effective way of preaching Christ.



Monday after the Fourth Sunday after Epiphany

Godliness, 1.

Read 1 Tim. iii: 15; 1 St. John iv: 13-17

I. St. Paul teaches us that the Mystery of Godliness is being revealed in the Church of the Living God, the pillar and ground of the Truth. He means that each Catholic soul should be a Jacob, illuminated by Christ, as he finds his place of rest to be the Gate of Heaven, and, in the light that shines from above, beholds the blessed angels moving in their unbroken chain between Christ in Heaven and His Church on earth. It is a favorite thought of the Apostle that these angelic spirits, these "Sons of God," who shouted for joy at the creation of our world, are profoundly interested in the development of godliness within our souls. Thus he declares that the principalities and powers in heavenly places attend upon the Church, that through her they may know the manifold, or 'many-coloured' wisdom of God (Eph. iii: 10). It is as though the Church were a refracting medium with multitudinous facets, each of which is a soul reflecting back to the holy angels a feature of Christ, so that the whole is His perfect facsimile. Am I developing before the angels my little glint of Christ's perfection?

II. 'Great,' says the apostle, 'great beyond controversy, is the Mystery of Godliness, He Who was manifest in the flesh' (A.V. marg.). The "Mystery"

or "Sacrament" here is Christ, Who being the perfect Son of God came in our humanity to teach us the way of sonship to a Heavenly Father. "Great," indeed, it is for us to be called *and to be* the sons of God (1 St. John iii: 1; cf. A.V. marg.). As God is, so must I be in this world. (1 St. John iv: 17.)

III. Consider that this revelation in the Church of God is His response to our deepest need. "O, that thou wouldest rend the Heavens, that Thou wouldest come down," cried our race. "I have loved thee with an everlasting love, therefore will I draw thee," came the swift answer. But how? "I will draw thee with the cords of a Man, with the bands of love,"—draw thee to love Me and to be like Me.



Tuesday after the Fourth Sunday after Epiphany

Godliness, 11.

Read 1 Tim. iii: 16; Col. iii: 9-13

I. St. Paul has selected certain episodes out of Christ's life which make up together the outline of His communication to us of godliness, first in ideal, then in power. (1) The first couplet of these verses teaches that the Mystery of Godliness was *manifested* in Christ's Humanity, but was *justified* (to our faith) in His spiritual Self. It was the revelation of His perfect interior holiness which proved this Nazarene Carpenter to be God. Thus the ideal of a righteous inner life was first given to mankind by the Incarnation. The great pagan moralist, Cicero, writing to his son at college, and quoting Euripides, perhaps the truest ethical teacher among the Greek dramatists, teaches the lad that he may rightly "swear with his tongue, and yet bear a mind unsworn." But we have learned

from Christ that a child of God must be "sincere and without offense."

II. The Great Mystery was (2) seen by angels, and heralded among the Gentiles. Christ was a new revelation of Sonship not only to poor heathen, but to the highest angels. "Which things," St. Peter says of the Incarnation, "the angels [bend and peer and] desire to look into." How beautiful is the love of God which taught the lesson of Sonship to our ancestors, called along with all the peoples of northern Europe, *Scythians*. Not only did Christ, the Mystery, enter into cultured Greek, theocratic Jew, and learned Egyptian, but He became All *in* all, to our savage Scythian progenitors.

III. Christ was (3) believed on in the world, and taken up (and throned) in glory. Thus He was approved in Heaven and earth to be the Son of God with power. Henceforth the very air I breathe is sacred, and the world has become a sanctuary, since He has consecrated it for the children of His Father, among whom I am one.



Wednesday after the Fourth Sunday after Epiphany

Poverty.

Read St. Luke ii: 22-39

I. The little group made up of the Blessed Virgin with our Lord in her arms, St. Joseph, St. Simeon, and the holy widow Anna, who had given her whole life to devotion in the temple, teach the lesson of poverty. Consider that the Blessed Mother had only two doves to sacrifice for her "purification" after the birth of this Child, Who was the Wonderful Counsellor, the mighty God, the Everlasting Father,

the Prince of Peace. The later saints of the Church have been quick to catch this lesson. St. Thomas Aquinas chose to write one of his great treatises on scraps of waste paper. And even the noblest of the pagan philosophers taught their followers poverty in material things. Thus Crates exclaimed as, according to a tradition probably metaphorical, he threw his great fortune into the sea: "I will drown you now, lest hereafter you should drown me." We have a natural love of luxury, convenience and beautiful surroundings; lest they should grow upon us until we love *things* more than God, let us learn from the Blessed Virgin often to do without them, when we might lawfully have them.

II. She may instruct us also in the spirit of poverty with regard to our rightful prerogatives, which we are prone to guard so jealously. She need not have made the long journey to Jerusalem for purification, because the law requiring this was not made for the Mother of God; but she waived her lawful immunity. We love, too, our independence and our cherished opinions and our own way. But Mary makes a ready and humble submission of all that is her own.

III. We must learn poverty as to spiritual consolations. The Holy Mother was trained in this by the sharp discipline of the three days' loss, when she sought for her dear Son and failed to find Him, yet there followed eighteen years of union with Him; and then by fifteen years of waiting after the Ascension, until at last she was rewarded for her patience and self-surrender during this long, weary time with the possession of her Son forever in Heaven.



Thursday after the Fourth Sunday after Epiphany

Escape from the World with Jesus. Read St. Luke iii: 1-6

I. Very soon after the Purification the Blessed Mother had to flee with our Lord from even the poor little Bethlehem home. She lost all, but it was to gain all. Let us flee the allurements of this present world, that we may not lose Christ Who is the Joy of the whole world, the "Desire of all nations." Through love for Jesus the world must become a desert to us, and we must make our pilgrimage through it carrying Him in our hearts as Mary bore Him in her arms.

II. Our Saviour is always Conqueror in the desert. Thus He came up from the wilderness of Seir with ten thousands of Saints (Deut. xxxiii: 2); from the bare crags of Edom He came, travelling in the greatness of His strength, and "mighty to save" (Is. lxiii: 1); Habakkuk saw Him come from the southern desert of Teman with power hidden in His hands, and victory in His grasp. Finally it was in a desert that he triumphed over Satan on the Mount of the Temptations. To live in a wilderness of spiritual detachment from our environment is to become conquerors with Jehovah. To have no joy but the Lord is our strength (Neh. viii: 10).

III. Our Lord delights to comfort His people in the desert by the revelation of His presence, and His word of Love. Thus His word came not to the rulers,—Cæsar, Pilate, Herod, Philip or Lysanias, nor to Annas and Caiaphas, the high priests, nor to any princes or prelates in their pomp and luxury,—but to John, son of the poor priest, in his cave in the wilderness. And not to a great Saint only, but to

each Christian soul He promises: 'Behold, I will allure her, and bring her into the desert, and speak to her heart.'



Friday after the Fourth Sunday after Epiphany

The Desert of Self-denial.

Read Judges vii : 4-9

I. For our own safety we need to mortify our natural desires. "The flesh," St. Paul says, "lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh, so that ye cannot do the things that ye would." Softness and luxury are dangerous, because they weaken our wills by self-indulgence, cool our love of God by cultivating an affection for earthly things, and throw us off our guard against the assaults of Satan through our bodily appetites. To fast, on the other hand, is strongly to bar the gates of our senses.

II. For service to others, also, there must be self-denial. Our Lord tested the army of Gideon in their campaign against the Midianites by having them drink from the stream. Those who flung themselves down flat on the bank and drank their fill He would not permit to fight for their country. But He accepted the three hundred who took water in their hands and "lapped" abstemiously, all the time watching for their foe. This little body of chosen soldiers conquered the vast hosts of their enemies with a war-cry, a trumpet, and a lamp. So we, if we are mortified, shall be Christ's chosen champions for weaker souls, having power to defeat Satan's army with the Light of the World, the trumpet-blast of the Gospel, and the sword of Christ's will and our own will united with His. "Thou, therefore, endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ."

III. Self-denial does greater honor to our Lord,

because we give up what we might lawfully have, for the sake of His glory. David was a man after His own Heart; and when his mighty men had, at the risk of their lives, brought him a precious draught from the well at Bethlehem, although he was in the heat of battle and famishing with thirst, he poured it out upon the ground to the greater glory of God. For my own soul's sake, therefore, for the good of my neighbor, and for the honor of my Lord, I resolve to sacrifice, especially on the Fridays and other fast days, somewhat of the portion permitted me.



Saturday after the Fourth Sunday after Epiphany

Homesickness for Heaven.

Read Ps. xlii.

I. How the Blessed Virgin and St. Joseph must have longed for home during those months in Egypt! If tradition speaks true, they sojourned at Heliopolis, amid worshipers of the sun, where they would be continually offended by the customs which characterized the services in the great heathen temple of the city. So we ought to feel ourselves exiles and pilgrims amid the heathen worshipers of money, position, and pleasure, around us. "My soul thirsteth for Thee; my flesh longeth for Thee in a dry and thirsty land." "As the hart panteth after the water-brooks, so panteth my soul after Thee, O God. My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God. When shall I come and appear before God?"

II. We cannot be satisfied with the husks, which content mere animal natures. Not only does St. Augustine tell us that our soul was made for God, and that we are restless until we rest in Him, but even

philosophers assure us that nothing will satisfy our longings except the possession of God. “*My God*” is the supreme Riches I inevitably long for. Thus Carlyle says that man can be satisfied with nothing but the universe. When I behold God I shall see that the universe is the expression of but one thought in my Father’s Mind. Again, Aristotle assures us that we must seek after the Absolute Good; and This, the Christian knows, is the infinitely perfect Divine Nature.

III. Death to a Christian who is homesick for God is but the casting off of the ropes which bind him to earth, with Christ in the Viaticum to speed the little boat of his soul over to the other side. ‘I desire,’ says St. Paul, ‘to cast off and be with Christ, for it is very far better’ (Phil. i: 23).



Fifth Sunday after Epiphany

To the Greater Glory of Jesus. Read St. Matt. xiii: 24-30; 36-42

I. The purpose of our life may be thus stated: “Whether ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God” (1 Cor. x: 31). Elsewhere St. Paul expresses the same thought by saying that whatsoever we do in word or deed we must do all in the Name of the Lord Jesus, our Redeemer. From these two inspired precepts it appears that all we do, from taking our food up to the most important matter, is always to be to the glory of God our Saviour,—our acts must be those which are worthy of souls redeemed by the Precious Blood and filled with its power. “We should be to the praise of His glory” (Eph. i: 12).

II. In our Lord’s parable to-day His servants came to ask Him, incredulously, how there *could* be

briers in the divine field. It passed their comprehension how the Church where the Holy Ghost produces the Fruit of the Spirit (Gal. v: 22) and which is watered by the dew of Heaven in the Sacraments, can bear any but glorious souls with which He Who binds up the sheaves may fill His Bosom.

III. Christ teaches this same lesson, that I must seek to be the fruit of His Passion, under a yet more appealing figure in St. John xii: 23 f. The hour had come, he said, when the Son of Man should be glorified, and He went on to tell the way in which that glorification should be accomplished. "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone, but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit." Would that my life might be glorious enough in good works to give proof that it has sprung from the Heart of that Corn of Wheat.



Monday after the Fifth Sunday after Epiphany

Devotion of Ourselves to Jesus.

Read Col. iii: 1-11

I. *Jesus only.* The saints have given themselves, body, mind, and soul, to glorify God in Christ, and Him only. "I determined," said St. Paul, philosopher and theologian as he was, with a mind stored with beautiful and interesting truths,— "I determined not to know anything among you save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified." *My* mind, too, will find a perfect object for its thought in Jesus only. My body and soul, also, must be given first of all to Him. "Ye are not your own, for ye were bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's."

II. *Jesus always.* "I will bless the Lord at all times; His praise shall continually be in my mouth."

The Blessed Virgin learned to magnify her Lord, and her spirit sang its song of rejoicing to Him just when the ground seemed slipping away beneath her feet, when, after she had received our Lord beneath her heart she had not yet seen St. Joseph, and, for all that she knew, might be friendless. It was as she went on her visit across the mountains to St. Elizabeth that for all her desolateness she learned to sing *Magnificat*. And the Church of which she is the type, sings her Magnificat just when the darkness is gathering.

III. *All for Jesus*. I ought to give myself to be consumed by love for Him Who gave Himself to be consumed for me. When Saint Ignatius, the martyr, faced the lions in the arena, he said: "I am Jesus' wheat, and I must be ground by the teeth of lions in order to be fit for His table." Let me also feed the hunger of my Lord with the gift of myself.



Tuesday after the Fifth Sunday after Epiphany

Lowliness.

Read 1 Cor. iv: 1-7

I. Lowliness is the spiritual annihilation of self-love, that our Saviour may receive all the glory. This virtue differs from other kinds of humility because it involves our seeing some grace of character or some progress in spirituality in ourselves. Humility in the ordinary sense, on the contrary, means that we sincerely believe ourselves to possess no spiritual beauty, or to have made no progress. Now when we perceive good in ourselves, lowliness requires that we immediately ascribe it wholly to Christ, as we read: "What hast thou that thou didst not receive? Now if thou didst receive it why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?" (1 Cor. iv: 7). Also we

must desire, that, as far as is compatible with edifying our neighbor, we may keep our grace hidden from men, and for the sight of our Lord alone. Lowliness is related to humility as virtue is to innocence.

II. The Blessed Virgin showed both humility and lowliness in perfection. Thus, at her Annunciation, when St. Gabriel had addressed her in terms of unparalleled praise, saying: "Hail, Mary, thou that art endued with grace, the Lord is with thee" (A. V. marg.), she was troubled, and cast about in her mind as to what it should mean, not knowing of anything in herself which would justify his salutation. This was the unconsciousness of humility. But at the Visitation she fully accepted the justice of St. Elizabeth's praise. Great things had been done to her, she declared; all generations should call her "blessed," even as her cousin had greeted her. At once, however, she turned the glory away from herself to God her Saviour, who had regarded her low estate, and had done to her these great things.

III. Lowliness has great advantages for me: (a) It protects me against self-consciousness, since it ascribes all good in myself and my deeds to Jesus; (b) It keeps me from insincerity with myself; (c) I learn by this virtue to keep my spiritual beauty for the pleasure of my Lord; just as the flower of the edelweiss blooms amid the snows of some inaccessible Alpine peak for the eye of God alone.



Wednesday after the Fifth Sunday after Epiphany

Glorifying God by Service.

Read Ps. xxx: 1-9

I. How many there are who even blaspheme our Lord and His Father! What happiness if I might

be allowed to set praise where irreverence was before, or to raise up into lovers of my God those who would otherwise become hardened in habits of sin! St. Catharine of Genoa used, in the hospital she served as nurse, to enjoy especially waiting upon a poor diseased, dying woman. It was her pleasure to teach the weak, swollen lips of this sufferer to stammer our Lord's name, and when they were striving to form it, the Saint would kiss them over and over. She could not refrain, she said, from loving the lips which were full of Jesus.

II. One of the words used in Holy Scripture for our redemption implies that Christ went out into the market-place of the world to buy the souls of men with His Precious Blood. Nor was it His intention to redeem a pre-determined few. He tasted death for every man. (Heb. ii: 9.) To-day He cannot go visibly from city to city, but must accomplish His purchase of souls through us. "What profit"—we must think of Him saying to us from the cross,— "What profit is there in My Blood when I go down to the pit?"

III. St. Bernardine made it his mission to reconcile hereditary enemies. In place of the insults they were accustomed to mark on each other's palaces, he taught them to set the I. H. S. with a cross surmounting the H., this being the symbol he had invented for "Jesus." When I see this sign of peace, become so familiar in our day, let me resolve to set Jesus between those who but now were sundered by enmity, and between souls and the God Whom they have been resisting.



Thursday after the Fifth Sunday after Epiphany**Glorifying God by Our Lives.**

Read 2 Thess. iii : 7-12

I. Picture the great Apostle of the Gentiles, late at night, by the poor light of his little lamp, bending down his dim eyes close to the canvas and stitching away at his tent-making. "I wrought with labor and travail night and day that we might not be chargeable to any of you," he wrote to the Thessalonians. And they knew that his manual labor had taken up much of the three weeks which it appears from the Acts was the brief period allowed him to evangelize them. The *preaching* of the Faith remained incomplete, so that it had to be supplemented by his two epistles to this Church. More important than his instructions was his teaching by example. Having counselled them (1 Thess. iv : 11), 'Be ambitious to be quiet and to do your own business, and to work with your own hands,' he must exemplify by his own life the virtues he had preached. Do I strive to cultivate in myself the virtues which I urge upon others?

II. Men have ever been ready to risk their lives for pleasure, fame, or fortune. But St. Paul recommends to me the example of Epaphroditus, who ventured his life for souls. 'For the work of Christ, he was nigh unto death, hazarding his life' (Phil. ii : 29 f.). "Such," he says, "hold in reputation." Let me then, to gain souls for Christ, gladly risk popularity, ease, money, or whatever it is which makes up the treasure and substance of my natural life.

III. Our hope, our joy, our crown of rejoicing in the presence of our Lord when He cometh, will be those we have brought to Him by the preaching of our holy life. (1 Thess. ii : 19.)



Friday after the Fifth Sunday after Epiphany**Glorifying God by Eucharistic Worship, 1.** Read 1 Cor. xi: 22-26

I. The second of the Ten Commandments bids us worship God. And Christ reiterates the precept of Deuteronomy, saying: "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God." But we Christians perform this obligation less as an act of duty than as our great happiness, the happiness of glorifying the One Whom we love. "If I be a Father, where is my honor?" is His appeal to our hearts. I must not be always seeking only to receive from my Heavenly Father. I must make Him my gift of worship. Prayers, hymns, my love in any form of adoration, are oblations He rejoices to accept.

II. Yet they are not perfect offerings, for they are fraught with the distractions and the coldness of self-will. The Eucharist is given to us for our perfect Act of "worship"; it is the one Offering we can make Which is "worth" acceptance, since it is the gift of Christ to His Father and ours. The ineffable Act of Charity which our Saviour made on the altar of the Cross is re-presented in the Eucharist. True, there is no repetition of Calvary, but the Holy Service is our re-petition of Christ's sacrifice, which it was His dying request that we should "do," for His Memorial. It is the pure Offering which He asks of His people, from the rising of the sun unto the going down of the same, as the proof that His "Name" is "great" among the "Gentiles" (Mal. i: 11).

III. To illustrate the primary and preëminent obligation of worship, Christ withered the fig tree, which on Holy Monday He found to have only leaves. It refused to satisfy His hunger with its first-fruits, therefore it was His decree that it should never be allowed to

minister to men. Thus He teaches me by the cursing of this chance growth out of a crevice by the roadside, that before my love of men stands my duty to love God. I must serve my Lord before I can truly help my fellow-men. Let me then resolve that I will always give Him the first-fruits of my week, and often of my day, when I expect to be most occupied in my "Church work," my charities, or benefactions.



Saturday after the Fifth Sunday after Epiphany

Glorifying God by Eucharistic Worship, 11.

Read St. Matt. xxi: 10-16

I. It is by frequently assisting at the Blessed Eucharist that I may learn to love God and praise Him more and more. When our Lord entered Jerusalem on the first Palm Sunday, many of those who had been enthusiastically acclaiming Him fell away from Him before the frowns of the Pharisees. When He entered the temple, however, the boys there took up the shout "Hosanna to the Son of David" with such devotion that they were quite oblivious of the cold, disapproving faces of their elders. These boys were, it seems, servers about the temple altar, and their contact even with the Old Testament sacrifices, prefiguring the Lamb of God, had quickened their instinct to praise the true Victim as He passed on to His Death. So shall we learn from the Holy Sacrifice, a deeper, tenderer devotion to the divine *Agnus Dei*.

II. The sacrifice on Mount Calvary was the supreme act of worship in the whole history of this world. For there the Perfect Man offered an obedience which had never faltered, a love which had

never flagged, a reparation which shrank from no depth of suffering to expiate man's age-long disobedience and self-will. But in every Eucharist that very same worship is rendered. The sacrifice of the Cross is continued in the Sacrament of the Altar. I can add nothing to the worthiness of that sacrificial worship, but I must bring my obedience, my love, my penitence, that they may be accepted in and through Him.

III. In the Holy Eucharist I can make a true reparation to God not only for my own sins, but for all the cruelty and wickedness, and heartless indifference to God, which go on day by day. In the obedience, the love, the expiation for sin which are offered at the altar every morning there is that which makes up to God for all that has been done against His holiness and love. Our Lord has made upon the Cross, He does make daily at the altar, "a full, perfect, and sufficient . . . satisfaction, for the sins of the whole world." The more the burden of the world's misery and shame weigh upon me, the more I must come to the Holy Eucharist to unite myself with Jesus in the highest Act of propitiation and love.



The Sixth Sunday after Epiphany

Eagles of Jesus.

Read Isa. xl: 27-31

I. Our Lord says in the Gospel of this day: "Wheresoever the Carcass is, there will the eagles be gathered together." The bird indicated by the Greek word here, and by its Hebrew equivalent, is a true eagle, with the characteristic flight towards the sun, and the other typical qualities displayed by the king of birds. But it feeds on the flesh of animals that

have died. Many of the Fathers see in this utterance of our Lord a prophecy of those who shall in Holy Communion feed upon His Body, Which died but Which lives for evermore, and by that heavenly Food be strong to wing their way towards Heaven.

II. It is this same bird to which the Psalmist refers when he says that God 'satisfieth thy soul with good things, so that thy youth is renewed like the eagle's' (Ps. ciii: 5). He is thinking of the fact that the eagle, by moulting every springtime, appears to become young again. The Lord's Body received in Holy Communion is that Good Thing which satisfies my soul, and enables it to return to its first love.

III. Isaiah, in his turn, speaks of those who wait upon the Lord, and so renew their strength, as being like this kind of eagles. The prophecy of them is that when natural strength shall utterly fail, these souls, nourished by the Body of God, shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run and not be weary, and they shall walk and not faint. At first this seems like an anticlimax. We would expect that these spiritual eagles would first walk, then run, and, last of all, mount up aloft. But is it not harder for me to walk and not faint? In the first fervor of devotion, I am carried along as by wings. Presently, however, I find it harder to get on in my prayers and meditations; still I run and am not weary. But when the monotony of routine oppresses me, when the first vividness and enthusiasm of my new rule are past, and I must walk, then it is that the Blessed Sacrament keeps me from fainting.



Monday after the Sixth Sunday after Epiphany**The Vision.**

Read Acts x: 9-16

I. The true servant of Christ is always primarily a visionary, a seer. Two Simons are shown us in the tenth chapter of the Acts,—Simon the tanner, busily engaged with his hides in the courtyard below, and Simon the Apostle, in ecstasy on the housetop, his whole mind and heart full of the vision he has seen. The sheet, full of all manner of creatures let down from Heaven, has been the revelation made to him of the limitless Love of God in order to take away his Jewish prejudices and to make him see that what God has cleansed by Holy Baptism is no longer common or unclean. Both Simons were Christians, but the seer was the really practical servant of Christ.

II. What is the content of the vision with which I must illuminate and stimulate my soul? First of all, it is of Christ, throned and crowned at the right hand of His Father, holding in His human grasp all power in Heaven and earth. Many things may be going wrong with the work of the Church in this world; many obstacles may be springing up in the path of her progress; but the vision of our Lord in glory reassures us. “We see not yet all things put under Him, but we see Jesus crowned with glory and honor” (Heb. ii: 9). Then I must also behold in vision the Sacred Wounds in the Body of my Lord, that I may realize how in Christ love is indissolubly linked with power. I must feel His perfect sympathy with all that I endure, and His willingness to set me free from all my hampering sins and to make me strong to do the work He appoints for me.

III. I am to be full of love and power, like my Lord Himself. With the vision of Him, and the

ideal of myself as another Christ, in my mind, I can, by His grace, transform my life and conduct as a sculptor transforms the block of stone to give outward expression to his vision.



Tuesday after the Sixth Sunday after Epiphany

The Inward Grace.

Read St. John i: 14-18

I. St. Paul, after speaking of his labors, which were more abundant than those of all the apostles, says that it was not he which had done this work for Christ but the grace of God that was in him. And a greater than St. Paul said of His power as Man, "I can of Mine Own Self do nothing." Therefore the greater and more effective my activity is, the more certain I ought to be that it is grace, not I, that is working. A little ray of light athwart the darkness of the night quite certainly proceeds from some flame of fire, though it may be very small. But the broad burst of splendor which gilds peak after peak of the mountains, and spreads downward into the lowest valleys, this could only come from the sun itself. So it is that a truly good and great work is always one generated by grace in our souls. The realization of this is the cure of self-consciousness and of sensitiveness over preferment of others beyond one's self.

II. Grace is the life-principle of my soul, and was poured into me from the Human Soul of Jesus, to make me like Him. "Of His fulness have all we received and grace for grace." "Grace and truth" have come together to me, "through Jesus Christ."

III. Of the luminaries in the clear heavens it is not the twinkling stars which give most light, but the great radiant planets. Why? Because they revolve about the centre of our system and reflect the

brilliance of the sun though it is hidden from our sight. So, also, must I seek, not to have sunlight of my own, but to reflect the brightness of the unseen Sun of Righteousness, and to shed His rays upon other hearts.



Wednesday after the Sixth Sunday after Epiphany

The Gift of Ourselves.

Read St. Luke ix: 57-62

I. All that is needed for me to become a great power for God is that I should surrender myself to His service. We have none of us done this at all perfectly, and when we reflect that "We are here to help God" and have done so little to help Him we may well feel a sense of discontent and disappointment with ourselves. Christ pleads with us not to look back after we have once set our hand to the plow. For He tells us that, if we are like one who has a hand on the plow and turns his face away from the goal, we are not 'well placed for the Kingdom of God' (St. Luke ix: 62). He means that though we have been plowing up our hard hearts with faces set toward the Kingdom of God, yet, if we turn our heads to look over the furrows already made and so pause in our spiritual progress, we forfeit, while we are thus wrongly "placed," our right to the Kingdom.

II. Jesus asks for perfect self-surrender from us. How He rejoiced over the poor widow who had cast into the temple treasury all her living! He would have all *my* living, also,—not my Sundays only, but my week-days, and my nights. I must learn to carry Him with me continually, though I may not always retain the vivid consciousness of His Presence, and to

do my daily task and take my recreation as one who is in life-service to Him.

III. It was when our Lord had stripped Himself of His friends, His clothing, and even of His Body, on the first Good Friday, that He made a show of the infernal principalities and powers, triumphing over them in His Cross (Col. ii: 15, R. V. marg.). Thus He teaches me that I shall conquer Satan by spiritually stripping myself of all things in order to be like Christ in His poverty.



Thursday after the Sixth Sunday after Epiphany

The Work of Our Great High Priest. Read Hosea xi: 1-9

I. The work of perfecting us for service is primarily God's, for He worketh in us "both to will and to do." We have reason to hope that we shall make progress when we realize that it is He who hath begun a good work in us, and that He will perform it unto the glorious end. Our sanctification is of intense concern to Him. Our weakness comes from forgetting this. Christ speaks as a father to us His children: 'I taught you to walk, taking you by your arms, but you knew not that I healed you when you fell and hurt yourselves.' (Hosea xi: 3.)

II. A soul thus consecrated by the Divine Priest is effective, quite apart from natural endowments. Thus the apostles, when they had been close to our Lord and had received a measure of His Spirit, carried no natural means even of subsistence on their missionary journeys, yet they were able to accomplish great results for their Lord. "When I sent you without purse and scrip and shoes," He asked them, "lacked ye anything?" And they answered, "Nothing."

III. For us to recognize, and to rejoice in, our dependence on Jesus is the very way to bring down His Presence to envelope and strengthen us. After St. Paul had thrice prayed to be relieved from the buffeting of Satan, at length the answer came: "My grace is sufficient for thee, for My strength is perfected in weakness." "Most gladly, therefore," cried the great Apostle, as we may paraphrase his words, "will I rather glory in my infirmities, in order that I may bring the power of Christ to tabernacle upon me." (2 Cor. xii: 9.)



Friday after the Sixth Sunday after Epiphany

Our Sanctification.

Read Hosea xiv.

I. The Holy Scripture uses for an analogue of souls consecrated to God lilies, the purest and most vigorous of flowers, which bloom even after they are plucked and put in the vase, so willing do they seem to be to continue their ministry of beauty. A soul which is purified becomes like these whitest, sweetest, and most attractive flowers. And it is by grace from our Saviour that we become thus manifoldly serviceable in His Hands. "I will heal their backsliding," He says, "I will love them freely. I will be as the dew to Israel, he shall grow as the lily."

II. Christ teaches this same lesson of our need of purity under the figure of light, saying, "I am the Light of the World"; and then in another place: "Ye are the light of the world." My soul is to catch the flame from Jesus, and become like Him pure white light. It will often be my duty, in my work for souls, to come into contact with sin, and it is only as light that I can do so safely; for light never con-

tracts disease; rather it destroys what is noxious and corrupting.

III. When the Son of God commanded His Spirit into His Father's Hands, it was "quickened," and sent to enlighten and release the spirits in prison, that is, those who were expecting Him in their place of waiting. First I must give up my spirit into my Father's Hands and then He will send me on His mission to those who sit in darkness and the shadow of death.



Saturday after the Sixth Sunday after Epiphany **Effectiveness Dependent on Spirituality.**

Read Is. lviii: 6-12

I. In the vision which Isaiah saw, wherein he beheld Jehovah lifted up above the altar and surrounded by seraphim, there is a parable of our life of service. For these spirits, whose very name indicates that they are flames of love, covered their bodies and faces, so that they appeared as being all wings and voice. Thus, if we come close to Christ and are, like the seraphim, filled with His love, our life will be divided between good works and praise.

II. Both the Old Testament and the New tell us that we must give to the needy the fruit of our spiritual life. Thus Isaiah says: "Do thou give to the hungry the bread of thy soul, and satisfy the afflicted soul" (Is. lviii; 10, paraphrased). Therefore I must lay up grace for those whose immortal souls Christ would have me feed.

III. Our Lord confirms this statement of His prophet, saying: 'Give alms of what is within you' (St. Luke xi: 41). However poor I may be in earthly goods, and however without talent or worldly position, yet I may have abundant alms of that very

kind which Christ brought from Heaven to earth in the treasury of His Humanity when He came to make us rich.



Septuagesima

Order in Our Spiritual Life. Read the Epistle for the Day.

I. "I press towards the mark, for the prize of the upward calling of God in Christ Jesus" (Phil. iii: 14, marg.). Thus St. Paul, under the parable of a contest like the Isthmian games of his day, teaches us about that spiritual race in which he was engaged as an athlete of Christ. He ran his course by the exact rules of racing. "So run I, not as uncertainly," he says in the Epistle to-day. Am I irregular and spasmodic in my spiritual life? Do I run here and there out of the course in which my feet have been set? Then let me remember that the course is the Christian life, the goal Heaven, and the prize Christ.

II. I need a simple rule to direct my running, that all things in my spiritual life may be done decently and in order. For disorder is the state of Hell; as Job says, "It is a place of darkness and without any order." And, on the other hand, order is the first law of Heaven. "God is not the author of confusion." The late Primate of Scotland used to point out to the young men training under him for the priesthood the perfect order with which, as St. John saw, everything in Heaven is done.

III. Philosophy joins with Revelation to teach us that the life set in order by rule is the most effective and pleasing. Plato urges that our interior should be rhythmic. It should have even beats, cadences and inflections, of prayer, study, service and worship. St. Paul first instructs us to 'walk by rule' (Eph. v: 15)

and then, as if his mind passes on from the rhythm of such a walk to the thought of how much we please God by a life that is in tune, "Sing," he says, "and make melody in your heart to the Lord." Now no music can be pleasing to *our* ear which is devoid of time and rhythm. Surely God, the Great Musician, from Whose "wisdom sweetly ordering all things" comes the music of the spheres,—surely He must want our lives to be evenly modulated by rule and harmonious.



Monday after Septuagesima

Self-Discipline.

Read Ps. 1: 1-17

I. "So fight I," declared St. Paul, "not as one that beateth the air." He was Christ's soldier, disciplined and trained. Surely he knew how to fight, for even in bodily conflict he fought with wild beasts at Ephesus, and, spiritual giant as he was, he is well qualified to instruct me in my spiritual warfare. It is striking that the soldiers in the New Testament who confessed Christ were all, like this great Apostle and warrior, spiritually successful. The one who came to our Lord to obtain the cure of his sick servant, he who confessed the divinity of Christ at the Cross, and St. Cornelius, whose prayers and alms went up as a memorial before God even when he was not yet baptized—these men knew, because of their disciplined lives, how to bend mind and will to the obedience of the Faith. Let me be a good soldier of Christ, like these saints, and like the King of Saints let me learn obedience through the things which I suffer.

II. The Son of God lived a life of continuous self-discipline, from Bethlehem to Golgotha. And he complains of an unmortified Christian: 'Why dost

thou declare My law and takest my covenant in thy mouth, whereas thou hatest discipline?' St. Paul, in the Epistle for this week, declares that he was accustomed to 'Beat his body black and blue beneath the eye,' lest, when he had preached to others, he should himself be a "castaway." Surely, then, I ought to be willing to keep my fast days faithfully, and to make my Lenten rule severe enough really to mortify my corrupt affections.

III. The strongest, truest motive of my self-discipline is that thus I receive more of Christ-likeness. My nature is like a camera in which my soul is the sensitive plate, the shutter is my self, the photographer is my will, and the image to be received is Christ.



Tuesday after Septuagesima

Working in the Vineyard.

Read Eph. v: 15-20

I. 'See then that ye walk by rule, buying up the opportunity, for these are hard times for Christ.' In these words St. Paul, perhaps the greatest of laborers for Jesus, declares the rule of Christian service (Eph. v: 15 f.; cf. R. V.). 'Walk in wisdom,' he says in another place, 'towards them that are without, buying up the opportunity' (Col. iv: 5). So, then, it depends upon me whether or not my Lord prospers in gaining souls. It is I who must, by a life of rule and the wisdom of the Holy Spirit, become a captain of industry for Jesus, grasping every lost coin of His and laying it up in His Trust Company, the Catholic Church, lest He starve for lack of souls these hard times.

II. How much of my life is given to purely secular, or even merely idle, talk? May I not some-

times suggest in my conversation the thought of my Lord or the example of His saints? The apostles were forbidden, says John Keble, to waste time in idle civilities, when they were sent forth on their missionary journeys. This was the meaning of our Lord's command: "Salute no man by the way."

III. St. Paul gathers together in one verse the manifold conceptions bound up in the words "Christian Service." "God," he declares, "hath anointed us [and so made us other Christs]; and sealed us [as His message to the world], and given us in our hearts the earnest of His Spirit [as being the pledge that we shall have more of the Spirit of Love for the asking]."



Wednesday after Septuagesima

Our Spiritual Equipment for Service.

Read Phil. i: 6-11

I. In work for Christ we must have, first of all, humility, else we shall but "grind the faces" of God's people by our prideful ways. Let us often practice the mortification of our pride. For one thing, when we can ascribe to others the praise for a good work, without likelihood of our being contradicted, let us delight to do so. This was Jesus' way. How often when He had wrought some stupendous miracle by His divine power He would say to the one He had cured, or exorcised, "Thy faith hath saved thee." Faith had but made the man receptive of the gracious gifts, yet our Lord attributes the whole to him, leaving His own work out of view. So it was in everything. He attributed all the power and value of His life to His Father. "I do nothing of Myself," He said, "but as My Father hath taught Me, I speak these things."

II. Love must follow on humility, for, without it, humility would degenerate into pusillanimity. "Love," St. Teresa says, "works in a thousand ways." It was love in the Sacred Heart which made our Lord so universal, shining out upon men's souls in every shade of sympathy. "As every lovely hue is light, so every grace is love." Let me then enter into the Heart of Jesus, like the great missionary Apostle, who could say, 'God is my witness, how I long after you all in the Heart of Jesus Christ.' From that point of view the debt of love is infinite. We are to owe no man anything *but* to love one another.

III. After, and with, humility and love, must come zeal. A great saint, who devoted many years of his life to rescue work in Rome, directs us out of his own experience to "pray, as if everything depended on our prayer; and work, as if everything depended on our labor."

Thursday after Septuagesima

The Inspiration of our Service. Read St. Mark iii: 31-36

I. Picture our Lord in the center of a multitude filling the house where He sat and close around Him His apostles and disciples. It was announced that His mother and brethren had reached the outer edge of the crowd and desired to speak with Him. Then Jesus looked around about on the half-circle of His friends and said, "behold My mother and My brethren." In this He meant to declare that He was more closely bound to those who serve God even than He was bound to His blessed mother by the *natural* relationship He bore to her. Thus St. Ambrose says: "Closer knit are the ties which bind souls, than those which bind bodies." In the supernatural

kinship of our common service, therefore, we are the Lord's brethren, and, even more inspiring to think of, we are like His blessed mother. St. Jerome, to indicate how this last can be, thus paraphrased our Lord's words: "These are My mother, who generate Me daily in the souls of believers."

II. It is through realizing the close and dear relationship to my Lord into which I am drawn by works of mercy like His own, that I can be always at my best in my service, and always increasing in devotion and efficiency. Habakkuk, after saying "I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation," or as the Fathers loved to translate it, "in the God of my Jesu," declared that the Lord God was his strength, and the source to him of all loftiness and nobility of character: "He will make my feet like hinds' feet, and He will make me to walk upon mine high places." It will exalt me even to be Godlike if I learn to rejoice above all in my Lord and in the relationship of mother and brother which he accords me as His fellow-laborer.

III. I am not left in doubt as to how one who is Jesus' mother must labor for souls. The Blessed Virgin has set the perfect example, by her heroic surrender of herself to be the Lord's "handmaid" in the Incarnation; by her loving intercession for those in need of Jesus' help at Cana; and most of all by the devotion to the salvation of sinners which made her stand and without a murmur offer her Son on the Cross for the redemption of the world, while the cruel sword pierced through and through her heart. I cannot be exalted, heroic, enough in my works of love if I am to share her nearness to Christ.



Friday after Septuagesima**Some Rules of Service.**

Read 1 Cor. xii: 4-11

I. I must regard myself as entrusted by God with all my powers and faculties for the sake of others. The more wealth, strength, talent, or holiness I have from Him, the greater my stewardship, my opportunity, and my responsibility. In our day a great maritime disaster has proved that this rule obtains with the natural man as well as with Christians. When the *Titanic* was sinking, the strong men, many of them wealthy, talented, and important through the wide influence they exercised, were expected to stand back and assist in the escape of weak women and children, many of whom were from the steerage. This was the duty that strength owed to weakness.

II. The more successful I am, the more I must see that all my good works are really due to God. There are differences of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are differences of ministries, but the same Lord; and there are differences of works, but the same God, Who worketh all that is good in all people. I am told categorically: "The work is not yours but God's." The Templars in old time set us a wonderful example, when they made their magnificent cavalry charges against the enemies of the Cross, singing, "Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us but unto Thy Name give the praise." With that same song on my lips let me attack the enemies of the Prince of Peace.

III. For above all things I must make it my rule to be a peacemaker, both by assaults upon the enemies of peace, and by works of spiritual charity for their victims. "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God," because, having made peace between themselves and God they,

like the Son of God, make peace between man and man, and between man and God.



Saturday after Septuagesima

Special Kinds of Service.

Read Acts viii: 27-39

I. I can attract souls to Christ by Christian joyfulness. Be not drunk with wine, wherein is profligacy, but be filled with the Spirit, St. Paul advises us. His thought is that the children of the world are carefree and joyous, and therefore attractive. Young people are drawn to their ruin through the apparent lightheartedness which convivial persons frequently display. And we are not to refuse to learn from the strategy of our spiritual enemy. "We are not ignorant of his devices," says St. Paul (2 Cor. ii: 11). Let me be always drinking in new draughts of the Holy Spirit, Whom my Heavenly Father will give me if I ask Him, that my joy may be tranquil and yet overflowing. Surely there ought to be no stint of my happiness since I have God for my own. St. Francis of Sales consoled a bankrupt with the saying: "Of a truth, he is very covetous whom *God* will not suffice."

II. My greatest and most difficult kind of service for my Lord is persevering labor for particular souls which He has, by their nearness to me, especially committed to my care. How eager the saints have been to gather souls in, one by one, for Christ! St. Philip the Deacon, being set down by the Holy Spirit within sight of one who was unconverted, *ran* to him and never left him until he had made him a member of Christ.

III. A third kind of labor wondrously blessed is intercession. This is indeed a *work* if we persevere

in it, as we see from the picture of a fervent intercessor which St. Paul draws in Col. iv: 12 ff. Epaphras, a Colossian, was confined in the same prison room with the Apostle, so that St. Paul could watch him at his prayers for his fellow Christians at Colosse. "He ever wrestles in prayer for you," is the literal meaning of the expressive Greek original, "I bear him witness that he has great labor on your behalf." The words bring Epaphras before our minds, pleading for the Colossians for hours, with tears and sighs. Let me be like him, pouring out my soul for those on my intercession list.



Sexagesima

Fertile to the Divine Seed.

Read 2 Cor. iv: 1-5

I. At each meditation, or Bible reading, hearken! The Sower goes forth to sow His seed. Every word is necessary for us. "Man liveth by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God," is the counsel of both Testaments, and St. Paul speaks with the most intense earnestness to the same effect when he says, "I testify unto you this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men, for I shrank not from declaring unto you the whole counsel of God" (Acts. xx: 26 f., R.V.). Evidently it would have meant the risk of immortal souls if he had withheld from them any of God's truth.

II. Consider that the Catholic Faith in itself is sure to "appeal" to all men. The great Apostle assumed as certain that "by manifestation of the truth" he would "commend" himself "to every man's conscience in the sight of God" (2 Cor. iv: 2).

III. In the annals of English saints there is a tradition that the Bible belonging to one of those holy

fathers of our Church was thrown into the sea. Afterwards when they found it above high-water mark on the shore, not a line in it was injured. Reverence has stored it safely in the British Museum, and one may see it there to-day. Let it be a sign to me of the inviolable dignity of every divine revelation and teaching in the Holy Book. Sacred Scripture is inspired of God, and is profitable to furnish my soul thoroughly unto all good works.



Monday after Sexagesima

The Honest and Good Heart.

Read Prov. iv: 23-27

I. 'Keep thy heart above all other things thou keepest,' says the sacred writer, 'for out of it are the issues of life.' Just as my body depends for its health and indeed its continued life upon my *physical* heart, so does the vitality of my soul depend upon my will, or *spiritual* heart, wherein the good word is kept and its fruit brought to perfection. The wise man goes on to point out this truth in detail: if our heart be right we will put away a perverse mouth, our eyes will look to the front, and we will keep the level, straight path with our feet.

II. But if I would be honest in heart, I must remember that my heart is naturally deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; so that without divine help I cannot know it (Jer. xvii: 9). In my examination of conscience I must always place myself recollectedly in the presence of my Lord, see myself with His eyes, and let Him search my heart as a miner explores the depths of the earth. (Ibid. 10.)

III. If I would be good-hearted, I must grow in the love of Jesus Christ, for that sacred fire will burn away every spot of sin, and so expand my heart that

no wrinkle will remain in it. Sweet Master, I am become like a leather bottle, shrunken and shrivelled from the smoke of the fire. But I will run the way of Thy commandments when Thou hast expanded my heart with love! (Ps. cxix; 83, 32.)



Tuesday after Sexagesima

The Honest and Good Heart Believing. Read St. John v: 39-47

I. Only the heart which our Lord described in His parable as "honest and good" is ready for the seed. In so far as mine is hard, like the beaten path across the field, the divine seed will lie on it until the excuses or lies I call to me like wanton birds come and carry it away. If there is a thin, superficial Christianity over the hardpan of selfishness, I shall make promises fast enough after a sermon or meditation, but my resolutions will all wither under the burning sun of temptation. Or if I am cultivating thorns along with Christian virtues, there is no question which will survive.

II. Belief in all that God speaks through His Bible and His Church depends ultimately on the real goodness of my heart. For conscience is an intellectual activity. It is the faculty which discerns intuitively the moral law written in my soul. But it is this same mental function upon which I must rely to discern God and spiritual truth. The same intelligence which recognizes right and wrong, and becomes keen in its judgment according as I obey it or not, constitutes the only spiritual organ I have with which to distinguish truth from falsehood in religious teaching. Thus an honest heart, or conscience, is essential if I would know the mind of God. Hy-

menæus put away a good *conscience*, and therefore made shipwreck of *faith*.

III. Our Lord has been careful to tell us plainly that our conscience is also our faith-faculty. "How can ye believe, which receive honor one of another, and seek not the honor that cometh from God only?" This He said to the Jews, showing them that pride was the root of their unbelief. And, then, to teach me that the best of all ways to increase my faith and my ability to receive the Gospel is to practice love of God and obedience to Him, He said that if I will to do the will of my Father I shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God. (St. John vii: 17, A.V. marg.)



Wednesday after Sexagesima

Our Hearts made Good by Baptism. Read Acts ix: 10-18

I. St. Paul was granted an almost unparalleled vision of our Saviour on the Damascus Road, and there became converted. "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" was the expression of his complete surrender of himself to Christ. Yet he was directed to wait in Damascus for the coming of God's messenger, and when Ananias came to show him what to do, it was that he should "arise and be baptized, and wash away" his "sins." (Acts ix: 17.)

II. Thus it is made plain to us that conversion before Baptism can but make the soul ready to receive forgiveness and regeneration. Our sins are taken away only by Baptism itself. And when the holy stream was poured upon my head it brought the torrent of Jesus' precious Blood flowing down over my soul. I washed my robe and made it white in the Blood of the Lamb, at the font.

III. In this initial sacrament Christ gave me the white marriage garment of righteousness, which he spun for me on the loom of His Cross. Or, if I think of my baptism in a more strictly theological way, the merits of the Atonement were then first applied to my soul. Jesus took all human nature. He reached down beneath individuality and sex, and took the thing itself in which every human being shares. Thus He became, at the Incarnation, the second Adam. Like the first parent of our race before the woman was taken from his side, Christ had all human nature in Himself. Therefore my nature was in the Divine-human Victim, Who was my Representative, not merely my Substitute, on the Cross. There this nature which was given me in baptism was sacrificed ; there it did penance for my sins ; there it accomplished the purpose of the Father and glorified Him. Then, long centuries later, it was given to me through the water and the words of Baptism, and not only covered my sins but obliterated them and left no scars. God did not simply *count* me righteous then : He *made* me righteous, through the gift of new life, which Jesus won for me on His Cross.



Thursday after Sexagesima

We were Sanctified by Grace in Baptism. Read St. John iv : 7-14

I. Sanctifying grace was infused into my half-dead soul at my baptism, in order that I might have strength to endure temptation. Mere unaided natural strength was not enough. Without grace I might indeed be respectable and moral, at least to all outward appearance, for a long time, perhaps for my whole life ; but pride, unbelief, or some other hidden vice would

inevitably work its ravages in that secret sphere of my heart, upon which only God looks. (1 Sam. xvi: 7.) A tree will often seem hearty until it snaps in a storm, disclosing the hollowness of its trunk. Our Lord, at one of the most solemn moments of His earthly ministry warned us of the havoc that Satan works in souls not strengthened by His grace. It was when He turned to the women who wept for Him by the Way of the Cross, and, displaying to them the marks of His enemies' cruelty in His poor bleeding Body, said: "If they do these things in the green tree, what shall be done in the dry?" (St. Luke xxiii: 31, R. V.). That is, "If Satan has such terrible power given him to tempt and harass Me, Who am full of the sap of grace, what shall he not be able to do with a soul which is dry like tinder, ready to be kindled by his fiery dart?"

II. Temptation, by its burning glare, makes the soul that is in grace grow towards its perfection, while it corrupts and ruins one which lacks the principle of spiritual life. There is an analogy to this in the effect of the sun's heat on the growing plant, and on the carcass. The same fiery touch which causes the green stem and leaves to expand, will disintegrate the dead body.

III. Indeed, temptation tends to drive the soul that is in a state of grace to seek more grace. As heat drives the hunted hind to the rivulet, so does my soul pursued by its enemies thirst for the cooling, strengthening draught of grace from its fountain in the Heart of Jesus. And that living water which we thus crave is a well "springing up into everlasting life."



Friday after Sexagesima

We receive the Blessed Trinity in Baptism. Read 2 Cor. iv: 5-10

I. God is so mercifully anxious that we should believe His Presence within us that He has told us of it very plainly. The Father says, "I will dwell in them, and walk in them." Of the Blessed Son, St. Paul was inspired to write: "God Who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts to give the knowledge of the glory of God in the Face of Jesus Christ." The Holy Ghost, we are taught, makes us His temple. "Therefore," says St. Paul, "glorify God in your body and in your spirit which are God's."

II. Consider the love which is ours on the part of each Person. St. John thus expresses the Father's love: "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us that we should be called the children of God, and such we are." (A. V. marg.) The Holy Spirit's love, like the tenderness of a mother, appears in His teaching our hearts to cry "Abba, Father." As a mother leads her little one in the saying of the Paternoster, so does the Mother-love in the third Person of the Blessed Trinity guide my heart to pray. The Bridegroom's love is pictured for us by St. Paul: "I have espoused you to one Husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ." That was written to every Christian. Christ has wedded my heart to Himself.

III. Let me reflect that I have this Treasure of the indwelling Trinity in the earthen vessel of my human nature, frail at best, and already fractured by the fall. Remembering this, the power upon which I will depend will be from God and not from myself.



Saturday after Sexagesima

Our Regeneration in Baptism. Read St. Matt. xxviii: 16-20

I. The Scripture calls Baptism the "Laver of Regeneration." Let us consider three of the great blessings which this spiritual rebirth bestows upon us. First, then, our Blessed Saviour spoke of Baptism as our new birth by water and the Holy Ghost, which has opened the eyes of our soul to the kingdom of God. Through it God "has delivered us from the power of darkness, and translated us into the kingdom of the Son of His Love" (Col. i: 13, R.V.). Let me remember that I am already a citizen of that realm which is ruled by personal Love.

II. The mysterious power of the initial sacrament made me a child of God. Let me consider that this was by the undeserved love of my Heavenly Father, which is so great that it led Him to seek out my naked natural self, embrace it, and draw me into His own household of divine love. St. Austin tells us of one who had been his fellow Manichæan, whom he had himself encouraged to continue in heresy even after his friend had shown himself well disposed towards Christianity. The man became very ill, and while he was unconscious his friends had him baptized. Some days later he recovered consciousness, and St. Austin says that he expected to find his friend as before, a Manichæan. But God had wrought wonderfully in his soul, even while he was utterly helpless and only not consciously resisting grace, and from that moment he began a Christian life of singular purity and holiness. My Heavenly Father has worked within me this same regeneration for His love's sake. And loyalty to my spiritual heritage combines with gratitude to demand of me a

life worthy of my heavenly parentage. St. John declares, in terms of supreme confidence, that I will be faithful, that since I am born of God I surely will not commit (mortal) sin, "for His seed remaineth in" me. (1 St. John iii: 9.)

III. My baptism was '*into* the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.' "Name," here, as always, means "character." Therefore there was impressed upon my soul when I was made a Christian the very Character of the Blessed Trinity, for I was incorporated into the family of God by regeneration.



Quinquagesima

Our Baptismal Vows.

Read the Gospel for the Day.

I. Bartimæus sat at the gate of the City of Sin, blind and a beggar. Our Lord passed by and the poor mendicant, moved by His grace, cried out to Him and was at once commanded to come. Immediately he threw away his cloak and groped his way toward Christ, whereupon Divine Love opened his eyes and set him free from his blindness. Then he followed our Lord, glorifying Him. There is a singular tradition that Bartimæus alone stood by Jesus through all His trial and suffering. In the light of that legend he is a symbol of a soul coming to Baptism and afterwards faithfully following Christ and continuing with Him through all the difficulties of life.

II. Let me reflect upon the renunciation, which was one element of my baptismal covenant. I swore to renounce the devil and all his works, the vain pomps and vanities of the wicked world and all the sinful lusts of the flesh. Let me ask God this day to

make me realize how empty and foolish is the pleasure which attracts me! I see a little child eagerly grasping at the bubble which floats beautiful with iridescent images, before his eyes, and I smile from the height of my superior wisdom. Yet could I grasp the whole world it would be, like the child, to find nothing in my hand.

III. To believe and to do,—this is the substance of my other two vows. Together they bid me always seize the first opportunity of following the new vision of truth vouchsafed to me. Bartimæus set out at once on his new life, without even looking back to find his lost cloak. Having the vision of Jesus' face, he must follow his Lord on His way to Jerusalem, the Vision of Peace.



Monday after Quinquagesima

Sins after Baptism.

Read 1 St. John ii: 15-19

I. As I approach Lent let me appreciate the malice of sin. My evil doing is primarily against God; for He claims my whole being. "Son, give Me thy heart." "The body is for the Lord." In a word, my body and my spirit are God's. I am His by the first of all rights for He made me. And in my baptism He remade me to be the temple of His Holy Spirit. To use mind or body for sin is to rob Him of that which belongs to Him; it is a sacrilegious invasion of the sanctuary of His Presence.

II. But sin is a worse thing than this, for it is an offence against the love of God. St. John tells me of three evils which violate the love of the Father. The first is "the lust of the flesh." How easily and readily do I fall into sloth, softness, and self-indulgence, and how lightly I regard the malice of what

I call my "little" sins! The second of these evils is "the lust of the eyes." Do I ever set my heart on things that shut God out?

III. Deepest of all these sinful tendencies within me is the third evil, which St. John calls "the pride of life." It is the self-assertiveness which leads the soul to depend upon itself, its own wisdom, cleverness, ability, as though it had no need of God. Satan is the "king over all the children of pride" (Job. xli: 34), for when I give way to presumption and neglect of God I fall under the power of my spiritual enemies, and learn, perhaps too late, that I have no strength of my own and that only by humility can I be exalted.



Shrove Tuesday

Our Lenten Shrift.

Read St. Matt. iii: 13-17

I. Picture Jesus coming to Jordan that He might go down into the water and receive the baptism of repentance. There on the bank of the river stood the immaculate Son of God, amid profligate sinners, rapacious soldiery, fallen women from the streets of Jerusalem, and the hard-hearted Pharisees. It was God's merciful token of His love for penitents that He was numbered among these transgressors as they confessed their sins to St. John Baptist. I ought to feel that He is very near me as I kneel to-day sorrowing for my sins, and seeking His absolution.

II. I mean to make my venture of faith for God this Lent. I am going to seek to be prepared for the righteousness He is waiting to communicate to my soul. But the first step in this preparation is repentance for my sin. Remember, my soul, what He said to St. John Baptist: "Thus it becometh us to

fulfil all righteousness." It becometh me to start upon the work of fulfilling all righteousness through the grace which He, the Holy and Righteous One, has procured for me the sinner, by His own humiliation. God will then proclaim me to be His blessed child in whom He is well pleased, and the Holy Spirit will come upon me in yet greater measure.

III. These forty days before me will be a time of temptation such as my Lord endured on the mount. Together we shall be driven by the Spirit into the wilderness (St. Mark i: 12), to be tempted of the devil. But I need fear nothing, when through absolution I have been fully reconciled to my Heavenly Father, have become once more the familiar friend of Jesus, and have placed myself under that Spirit of God Who leads His sons.



Ash Wednesday

Our Spiritual Warfare.

Read Gen. iv: 1-7

I. Sin is crouching at the door of my heart, seeking an entrance. Like a wild beast it lies in wait desiring to devour my soul. But there is Another, knocking with nail-pierced Hands at that door. Before Him the evil thing slinks away, and if I will let Him in, no power of temptation can overcome me.

II. To-day I must awake to righteousness. Every faculty of my spiritual being must be on the alert as I enter upon these forty days with Christ. My Lord declared those servants to be blessed to whom He would come in the third watch and find them ready for Him. This was the long, hard watch through the hours between midnight and dawn, when vitality is lowest and languor steals over every sense. It is in

this third watch of the spiritual life that the self-discipline of Lent will show itself in alert watchfulness against the beast, and for the coming of Jesus.

III. One of the ancient strong men of God was Benaiah, of whom it is related, as a proof of his heroism, that he went down and slew a lion in the midst of a pit in time of snow (1 Chron. xi: 22). I resolve to emulate his example. Now I shall take the offensive and attack my spiritual enemy in the season of inclemency of outward conditions and hardship to the flesh. From the example of the saints it is plain that every one of them was a Benaiah. In seasons of self-discipline, prayerfulness and love of Christ, they faced their temptations with fresh courage and confidence in God and smote them with the sword of the Spirit. In this same way, in this time of fasting and self-denial, I must find out my principal sins by self-examination, and overcome them by good resolutions and prayer.



First Thursday in Lent

Sin Means Missing the Mark.

Read Job xxvii: 1-10

I. By sin I miss the one true end of my existence, which is to have God for "my God." In this present life I am to look up and direct my spiritual gaze and my heart's love to Him, as I hope to do through a blessed eternity. My soul is to seek His Face through the day, as flowers follow the sun in its passage across the sky. But by sin I turn aside to the things beneath me, and lose sight of my true goal. (Job xxvii: 8 ff.)

II. But sin has another result than the missing of my destined end; for through it God's purpose for me is balked. He made my soul for His own great

ends. He bestowed upon it a vocation to carry out His designs and finally to attain Him. But by disobedience I turn back and deal treacherously with Him, starting aside like a broken bow. Let me hearken to the saying of God's brave soldier, Gen. Gordon, when he was sent to relieve Khartoum: "I am doing what I think will please God; I am going as straight as I can; I am alone and I like it."

III. "Before all things the end is to be considered, and according to the end our course is to be directed." The point toward which I am moving determines every step of the road. The question I need to ask in each issue that presents itself, each choice I must make is: "Am I really facing Heavenwards? Can I see the Cross before me? What choice will carry me on towards God?"



First Friday in Lent

Sin is Lawlessness.

Read 1 St. John iii: 1-5

I. Sin is lawlessness because it breaks the law of God's Nature which underlies all things as the ultimate standard of right. This holy law is within our souls, for we are made in our Heavenly Father's image, and by our baptism we are His children and bear His likeness. "I have said," our Lord quoted from Ps. lxxxii: 6, "ye are gods"; "and," the Psalmist continues, "ye are all the children of the Most High." As the characteristics of the natural father are reproduced in his children, so the spiritual lineaments of the one God and Father are in us all, however blurred or obscured by our sin. It is from Him, St. Paul teaches (Eph. iii: 15), that every family in Heaven and earth is "named" or "endowed with character."

And every man's conscience declares to him that natural law written in his heart (Rom. ii: 15).

II. To sin, therefore, is to break the basic law of our nature. This is why God, through the prophet Amos, declares that iniquity is as unreasonable and unnatural as the most insane vagaries in the conduct of the affairs of life. 'Shall horses run up the crag?' he asks. 'Will you plough the sea with oxen, that ye have turned judgment into poison, and the fruit of righteousness into wormwood?' (Amos vi: 12).

III. My sin transgresses the law of my true development. It is a violation of my duty to myself, for my only true nobility is attained by living according to the principles of God's Character. My mind was made to be conformed to the Mind of God, and it must develop this glorious likeness by learning, as Francis Bacon said, "to rest in Providence, move in charity, and turn upon the poles of truth."



First Saturday in Lent

Called to be Saints.

Read 1 St. John ii: 1-14

I. How tremendous is the purpose of my life! I came from God; I belong to God; I go to God. But to attain the goal I must set my face like a flint, and let nothing distract me from seeking my predestined end. Browning voices Johannes Agricola's resolution in these glowing words, which I may well make my own:

"For I intend to get to God.
For 'tis to God I speed so fast:
For in God's breast, my own abode,
Those shoals of dazzling glory passed,
I lay my spirit down at last."

II. "I am of God, but I am formed out of clay." I perceive in the light of the Scriptures how easily I may wander from my way. Even the saints of the Bible are shown to have failed at times in those very virtues in which they ordinarily excelled. Thus Moses, renowned for his meekness, spoke irritably and smote the rock with violence; Elijah, who had displayed such intrepid devotion to his vocation, fled from his duty; St. John, the Apostle of love, would have called down fire upon the Samaritan village; St. Peter, who was so brave that he drew his sword against the armed band, cringed before a maidservant's ridicule. "Let him that thinketh he standeth," is the warning from God's Word, "take heed lest he fall."

III. What source of strength, then, can I find? The Incarnate God has provided me with an unfailing resource in the grace that flows from His pierced Heart. Aristotle refused to admit young men to the Academy. His teaching, he declared, was not only to give them knowledge of truth, but to induce them to practice it, and the young would, he affirmed, inevitably follow their own low inclinations. How differently St. John treated them! "I write unto you, young men," was his message, "because ye *have overcome* the wicked one." Their victory was already won in the power of the Crucified, Whose members they were.



First Sunday in Lent

Christ's Temptation and ours.

Read St. Luke iv: 1-13

I. Our Saviour was tempted all through His life. What a world of experience in enduring assaults does He reveal at only twelve years of age, when He answered His mother, "Wist ye not that I must be

about My Father's business?" As a Boy He foresaw the Passion, and through all those youthful years the terrible temptation to will His Cross out of His life was present. After the typical temptations recorded in the Gospel for to-day, Satan left Him "for a season," but only to return to the attack again and again with ever increasing malice.

II. I must not be surprised, then, if I also am never, until my death, wholly free from the assaults of the devil. But God the Father Who permitted Jesus to be tempted in all points like as we are, has taught me to regard my spiritual trial as permitted by Him, for His own wise purposes. There are two aspects, then, of temptation, and our Lord reveals them both when He says of the Passion He was about to endure: "This is the power of darkness," and yet: "The cup which My Father hath given Me shall I not drink it?"

III. Let me consider God's purposes in allowing me to sustain conflict with evil: (a) By the struggle my spiritual strength is increased; (b) By continuing true to God under assault I prove my love for Him; (c) I win a glorious triumph for my Saviour.

"Why comes temptation, but for man to meet
And master, and make crouch beneath his feet,
And so be pedestalled in triumph?"



Monday after the First Sunday in Lent

The Three Typical Temptations (1). Read Deut. vi: 6-16

I. In our Lord's three temptations in the desert we can trace the method which Satan uses in his campaign against our souls. In the first temptation he seeks to discourage us by the sense of our own weakness. "You are not going to hold out against

the pangs of hunger," he seems to say; "sooner or later you are bound to break down in the struggle of flesh at war with soul; why not give in at once instead of fighting a losing battle? Let the body have what it craves. Perhaps the soul will really be more free for spiritual exercises when the physical desires are satisfied." But freedom of the spirit does not lie that way. "Of whom a man is overcome of the same is he brought in bondage" (2 St. Peter ii: 19). Man, God's son, lives by doing the Father's will.

II. If, by divine grace, the soul wins the day in the first temptation, then (to follow the order of Christ's temptations as St. Matthew gives them) Satan seeks to ruin the soul by presumption and pride. "Of course, you are not going to submit to the dictation of the physical impulses," he says, "you are a truly spiritual person. You can, therefore, venture where others might well fear to go. You can show men that you enjoy special divine assistance. You can neglect ordinary precautions, and ignore the restraints of prudence and the demands of commonplace piety." But we may not thus take liberties with God.

III. Last of all comes the yet more subtle temptation of spiritual compromise. "After all," so Satan whispers, "the methods of the world have a certain value. It is stupid to ignore facts. Don't be a fanatic. Learn to avail yourself of the forces which insure outward success. Bow down to me and all shall be thine." But good never comes out of evil. Good-alone begets the good. There must be no divided allegiance. "Ye cannot serve God and Mammon" (St. Matt. vi: 24). "What is a man profited if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" (St. Matt. xvi: 26).

♦

Tuesday after the First Sunday in Lent

The Three Typical Temptations (11). Read Deut. viii: 2-6

I. Our Lord's example on the Mount of Temptation will help us in the more advanced stages of the spiritual life. Indeed it is only in the light of the Life of the Counsels that the full value of His three-fold conflict will appear. Why would He not turn stones into bread? It was because He had voluntarily determined to win the victory in our human nature, not in the power of His Godhead, that so He might in all points "be touched with the feeling of our infirmities." The assault of the devil was against this resolution of self-denial. It was like a temptation against some resolution whereby we put away from ourselves what otherwise we might lawfully have enjoyed. In any such temptation I must learn from Jesus to trust myself absolutely to my Father's unfailing word to support and sustain me. For the bread which I resign He will feed me with spiritual manna, that mysterious food spoken of in the very verse which our Lord used (Deut. viii: 3) in His rebuke to Satan.

II. In the second temptation the words which Satan quoted were true in themselves. (Ps. xci: 11-12.) For twelve legions of angels stood ready to bear Christ safely down to earth in their hands. But the tempter garbled the quotation by omitting the words "in all thy ways." It was only in the appointed "ways" of His Father's purpose for Him that our Lord would think or speak or act. I shall but dash my foot against a stone unless I walk in the path of God's purpose for me.

III. What might have seemed a pardonable compromise with evil would have secured this world to

our Lord. He was entitled to the whole universe, since "of Him, and through Him, and to Him are all things." But Satan was "the prince of the world," from whom, therefore, it might seem consistent that Jesus should receive dominion over it. But He would not yield one iota to the devil's claims, even were it to gain a world-empire of righteousness and peace. I, like my Lord, must be able to say: "The prince of this world hath *nothing* in me."



Wednesday after the First Sunday in Lent

Confidence under Temptation.

Read St. John x: 1-9

I. We have this blessed assurance from our Lord, that "when he putteth forth His own sheep, He goeth before them." The word for "putteth forth" is the same as that which is used of the Holy Spirit "driving" our Lord into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. It implies the gentle force which a shepherd would use in rousing his flock from their beds in the fold, that he might lead them forth to pasture. I will remember, therefore, when I am disturbed by temptation, startled out of the repose vouchsafed me by the Holy Spirit, that my Lord goes before me, both in that He has been "tempted in all points like as we are," and also in that I have His fellowship. I will take courage also from the certainty that He is but leading me forth to the "still waters" and "green pastures" of the grace I shall merit by resisting temptation.

II. However great and prolonged the assault of temptation may be, I know that my Saviour 'will not suffer me to be tempted above that I am able, but will with the temptation make a way of escape, that I

may be able to *bear* it.' The promise is not that it shall be taken from me, but that in the time of spiritual trial I shall find strength to endure.

III. St. John, writing to the Christians of Asia Minor who were in the midst of a terrible persecution, showed them, in a series of vivid pictures, that our Lord holds in His Hands the Book of Destiny, and that nought can come out of it, except as He, in His perfect wisdom and love, breaks the seals, one by one, and unrolls the book. (Rev. v.) And since it is only by His permission that distresses and miseries fall upon the world for the perfecting of His chosen, therefore He will never fail to strengthen them with the grace of endurance before, and during, their trials.



Thursday after the First Sunday in Lent

The Virtues by Which We Overcome Temptation.

Read St. Mark ix : 23-29

I. A *living* faith is what we need if we are to be shielded in the hour of temptation. Mere intellectual belief is an empty thing. Even the devils have that, for we are told that they "believe and tremble." Only faith that lives and acts by love is strong enough to repel the onset of our foes. Living faith is "the victory that overcometh the world" (1 St. John v : 4). To the man who besought Him to have compassion and help him, our Lord said, "All things are possible to him that believeth."

II. To my faith I must add holy fear of wounding my Father's tender love for me. When my Lord was sorely tried in the garden, He prayed "with strong crying and tears," and was heard "in that He feared."

If with a holy fear I dread to grieve and offend God, then I shall fear none other, man or devil.

III. "It does not take much of a man to be a Christian, but it takes all there is of him." That is to say, there must be no hedging, no half-way surrender. If we are to be strong to vanquish our enemies then we must give ourselves wholly to our Lord. There must be no reservations, no compromise with paganism, as if, like the newly converted Naaman, we go into the House of Rimmon, saying, "In this thing the Lord pardon thy servant" (2 Kings v: 18). A divided heart must not expect to win the day. Satan is not going to compromise. He is fully determined to vanquish us; we must be as fully determined not to give in.



Friday after the First Sunday in Lent

The Power of the Cross in Temptation. Read Num. ii: 1-31

I. As I study the formation of Israel's army in its march through the desert, it becomes evident that it was in the shape of a cross, with the Levites in the center bearing the tabernacle where was the awful Presence of Jehovah. This is a Scripture example to teach me that if I would attain to the Promised Land it must be with a heart marked with the cross of Christian self-mortification.

II. There is another way in which the Cross will avail me in times of danger. It will afford me a refuge to which I can run as soon as I am conscious of temptation. If only I think of Jesus Crucified at any moment of Satanic assault, especially if it be the suggestion of pride, doubt, or impurity, it will give me disgust for the sin which a moment before seemed

strangely attractive, because I shall think of it as the thing which nailed my Lord to the Tree.

III. It will help me, too, if in time of temptation I seek to realize that through my sin Satan is able to insult my crucified Lord (Isa. li: 23), and once again smite the Sacred Heart that loves me. Let me resolve to remember that Jesus is wounded by my sin, so that I may never more betray Him.



Saturday after the First Sunday in Lent

Meditation on the Passion, against Temptation.

Read St. Luke ii: 8-17

I. Out of all the faithful who were looking for redemption in Israel, the shepherds were chosen to attend the newborn King at His Nativity. Was not this because for long they had borne the tender relation of shepherds to flocks which were set apart for the temple sacrifices? During the long watches of the night these men had meditated on the sacrificial use to which their lambs were to be put, and thus had been made more ready to greet the coming of the Lamb of God. If I often meditate on the Passion it will make me so loving and tender toward Christ that my soul will be preserved from every evil and disposed always to come with joy to Him in the Blessed Sacrament.

II. How subtle my arch-enemy is in his temptations! How wise I need to become in order to detect his approach! Even Christ, when He had triumphantly overcome the first temptation to distrust His Heavenly Father, was immediately tempted to presumption. He would not doubt that God would provide for His famished Body, therefore the devil

suggested that He cast Himself recklessly upon His Father's providence by leaping from the pinnacle of the temple. So he often tempts me to sin through perversion of the virtue by which I have just now overcome him. I must not be ignorant of his devices (2 Cor. ii: 11), but must ever be on my guard to meet fresh attacks.

III. Satan brought his most powerful temptation to assail our Saviour's fortitude on Calvary when he moved the Jews to promise that they would accept their Messiah if only He would come down from the Cross. Jesus longed to win His people by any means He could, yet He went steadily on to the seeming failure of His death.



Second Sunday in Lent

The Progress of Our Sanctification.

Read Ps. xxiv.

I. "We beseech you brethren that as ye have received of us how ye ought to walk and to please God, so ye would abound more and more. . . . And this is the will of God even your sanctification." The "walk" of a Christian is with God, Whom he bears in his heart. How great, then, is my need of sanctification! I exert myself to please *people* when I am associated with them. Am I careless and forgetful about pleasing God, Who is ever my unseen Companion on my way?

II. The progress of our sanctification is measured by the state of our hearts. How often God reveals to me in Holy Scripture that everything depends upon my "heart"; that is, that the source of all spirituality in my life is a pure, strong love of Him. "Your heart shall live for ever." "My heart said, Thy Face will I seek." "Your heart shall rejoice." "Who shall

ascend into the hill of the Lord? Even he that hath clean hands and a pure heart." My heart ought to be a heaven, since God dwells there.

III. I resolve, therefore, to realize God's Presence with me that I may appreciate His invitation to become more worthy of His fellowship. When I am alone I will remember that Thou, my holy Lord, "knowest my down-sitting and mine uprising; Thou art about my path and about my bed, and spiest out all my ways." When I am with others I will recall that saying of Solomon, "He that maketh many friends doeth it to his own destruction; but there is a Friend that sticketh closer than a brother" (Prov. xviii: 24, R.V.).



Monday after the Second Sunday in Lent

The Merit of Purity.

Read St. Luke ii: 19-23

I. St. Joseph was but a Nazarene carpenter, probably of small learning, and quite without power or influence. Yet he attained to be the foster-father of Incarnate God, and the protector of the Blessed Mother and of Jesus Himself through the divine Infancy and Boyhood. Surely this was the loftiest position ever held by a man, and he gained it simply by such purity of heart that God could safely commit to him the holy ever-Virgin Mother and her Divine Son.

II. St. Joseph was the head of the Holy Family in Nazareth. The Blessed Virgin, though she is the Queen of Heaven, owned him as her husband and sought to order her life in conformity with his loving guidance. And even the Divine Boy was subject to St. Joseph, accepted his teachings and worked under his direction. Am I true to the

principles which God has ordained in family life. Am I trying to make my home like the holy house of Nazareth?

III. St. Joseph, we may devoutly believe, made the holiest and most blessed of deaths, lying upon the very Heart of his Divine Foster-Son. But it is to this same unspeakably happy death that I am journeying, if I am pure in heart. I shall find the eternal God my refuge, and underneath me the everlasting Arms, and Eyes of infinite love will be looking into mine. "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God."



Tuesday after the Second Sunday in Lent

The Chastity of the Bridegroom. Read Song of Songs v: 9-13

I. While a saint reflects for me the holiness of Jesus, and gives me the example of what a mere human being can do in following my Lord, there is no help comparable to that I derive from studying the purity of my Bridegroom. 'My Beloved is dazzling white and ruddy,' the bride says of Him, and St. Jerome interprets this to mean that He is "dazzling white in His virgin purity and ruddy in His passion." The sacred text goes on to represent Jesus to me as the Type of the holiness I am to strive after, saying: 'He is lifted up as an ensign above the myriads' (Song v: 10).

II. Now I might conceive that true Christian sanctity, while perfect in itself, is cold and unattractive, as sometimes it is misrepresented in the "unco guid," but the people around Jesus in the Gospel reflect like mirrors the tender, attractive, very human holiness which was in our Lord's Soul and Face. The woman with issue would never have

dared draw close to one of the Jerusalem rabbis, and would have been far indeed from touching the hem of His robe, because she was levitically unclean. But about our Lord there was a goodness which somehow conveyed even to her Jewish mind that He would be willing to have her touch Him, and that if she might lay her finger on the hem of His robe she would be healed. So strong was the attraction He exerted over her that for all her weakness, she had fortitude enough to force her way through the dense crowd of men. My purity, too, is to be, not forbidding, but magnetic. "He that is joined unto the Lord is one Spirit" (1 Cor. vi: 17).

III. God and His saints are very zealous for our holiness. 'I am zealous over you with the zeal of God,' St. Paul declares to us; "for I [have] espoused you to one Husband that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ" (2 Cor. xi: 2).



Wednesday after the Second Sunday in Lent

The Chastity of Christ's Bride. Read Song of Songs iv: 10-15

I. Christ requires of this heart of mine which He has wedded to Himself that it should be "a garden inclosed, a spring shut up, a fountain sealed." By this He means that I am to keep my soul so crystal pure that He will always find His beautiful Face reflected in it. Every thought that is unworthy of Him dims the brightness of His image in me.

II. There are many cautions in Holy Scripture against permitting the approach of the unchaste suggestion. "I have made a covenant with my eyes," is the saying of holy Job, which the Christian saints have often repeated. "Thine eyes are as

doves' eyes behind thy veil," Christ says in praise of the heart He claims as His own (Song iv: 1, A.V. marg.). It is wisdom learned from Him and His holy ones which leads the Church to make us swear that we will renounce all the devil's "works," for it is through evil companions, problem plays and novels, and risky conversations, Satan's works, that he often makes his approach.

III. The practice of bodily mortification secures our chastity and directly leads to its increase. Peile, after commenting on the materialism of our comfortable age, which is producing no very great literature, sculpture, or paintings, declares that "soft living does not fit men either to create or to appreciate masterpieces." Now I am to appreciate and create in myself no less a masterpiece than the perfected image of Jesus Christ. Spiritual mortification also contributes directly to my sanctity. If I take but one of the virtues, demanding spiritual austerity, the Psalmist promises that 'God will beautify the meek with salvation'; or, as St. Jerome beautifully translates, "He will beautify the meek in Jesus." (Ps. cxlix: 4.)



Thursday after the Second Sunday in Lent

Our Meupials with Jesus.

Read Ex. xxxviii: 1-8

I. "The flashes [of love] are flashes of fire, a very flame of the Lord" (Song of Songs, viii: 6, R.V.). These exquisite words of devotion the Holy Spirit desires that each one of us shall say to Jesus Christ. They teach the "vehemency of love" for Christ, as the old heading to the chapter interprets them. The lightning flash of this holy charity is from the Heart of Jehovah to our heart. Therefore it is worth

more than all the “substance of [our] house” (*Ibid. v. 7*). “Many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it.” Indifference, worldliness, weariness will not be able to extinguish the fire of true love for Jesus in the Christian heart.

II. It is absorption in my Beloved which will save me from self-consciousness, with all its resulting dangers and evils. I must learn to “take nine looks at Jesus for one look at self.” The Jewish women in the wilderness gave up their metal mirrors to be made into a vessel for the sanctuary of Jehovah. So will love teach us to give these hearts which would have mirrored ourselves to be vessels for Christ’s service.

III. St. Francis de Sales took for his motto, “Love or death,” because he reasoned that it would be better to be dead than not to love Jesus. And it was his love of our Lord which developed him into a great Saint. How delightful is this cure of my natural vices! The saints say to me boldly out of their own experience: “Love, and do what you will.”



Friday after the Second Sunday in Lent

Satisfying Christ’s Thirst on the Cross. Read Isa. liii: 8-12

I. Christ is our “Everlasting Father” and we are the children is whom He would take delight. ‘When His soul shall make an offering for sin,’ was the promise to Him through Isaiah, ‘He shall see His seed’; that is, He shall look with happiness upon the children whom He begot in His Passion. This was the reward of His Sacrifice, the joy that was set before Him, for which He endured the Cross, despising its shame. But it will not make Him happy to look

upon His seed, unless He beholds in us His own royal beauty.

II. Again Isaiah prophesied that for the sake of His Cross the Lord shall "see [the fruit] of the travail of His soul and shall be satisfied." This is fulfilled when the thought of His Cross arouses penitence in us. As the most compassionate one of the soldiers brought Him sour wine and raised it to His Lips by a sprig of hyssop when He said, "I thirst," so must I grant Him the assuaging draught of my love, pressed to His lips on the bitter-sweet hyssop of penitence.

III. We must remember that our Lord thirsts not only for our salvation from sin and death, but for our growth in holiness, for our attaining to that form of saintliness for which we were created. "This is the will of God, even your sanctification." Do I make my communions not only because I need the help and comfort of my Lord within me, but because I want in some measure to satisfy His thirst to manifest His Life through me?



Saturday after the Second Sunday in Lent

Divine Love Overshadowing Us.

Read St. Luke i: 26-35

I. From God's way of effecting the Incarnation I perceive how He uses the materials our humanity provides Him in order to do a mighty work far transcending aught that we could anticipate. When God would take our nature He did not create it out of nothing, but was "born of a woman." There was no violent break with the past, for the Son of God was also the son of David. "Even in its revolutions Providence is conservative." And so also the divine love working out its results in my will and deed will

use all that is good in me, and will build its "more stately mansions" in my soul out of the raw materials of my whole past. I must not expect a cataclysmic conversion, now or at my death, but rather successive renewals growing one out of the other.

II. Faith and the truths which faith believes are both due to divine love coming upon mankind, as the Holy Ghost came upon the Blessed Mother. As He overshadowed her and empowered her to bear Christ, so supernatural grace must overshadow my reason to enable it to bring forth divine faith. Yet even by grace my mind could never have conceived the ineffable mysteries of the Catholic Religion. It must be enlightened by a revelation from God, although the divine truth only transcends reason without doing it violence. Now the Annunciation is not only a perfect analogue, it is also a wonderful illustration of both these truths. Mary was "endued with grace," therefore she could accept the two great fundamental mysteries of Christianity in one revelation; for St. Gabriel spoke to her of the Blessed Trinity, naming the Most High, His Son, and the Holy Ghost; and he taught her about the Incarnation. Yet He did not force her reason, but revealed these ineffable truths in a measure implicitly, using terms which her heart could receive and ponder and so come to understand more perfectly. God makes my reason, also, receptive, and then reveals new truth or a greater depth of a truth already taught me.

III. Love had first to redeem and perfect the nature of Mary with grace enough to fill her wholly, before she was worthy to give her flesh and blood for the purposes of the Incarnation. I am not to conceive of myself or my life as divided into two spheres, one of which is of nature, and the other of God. □ He

meant me also to be *endued* with grace, so that all my secular life, down even to taking my food (1 Cor. x: 31), may be the life of His servant (St. Luke i: 38).



Third Sunday in Lent

The Life of Love.

Read the Epistle for the Day.

I. "Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children; and walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given Himself for us, an Offering and a Sacrifice to God." The Model, therefore, of the "followers of God," who "walk in love," is the Incarnate Son, loving with all His Heart and Soul and Mind and Strength on the Cross. And His Passion not only affords me the supreme example of love; it also speaks with a divinely powerful appeal and claims my heart for a life of devotion to Him and to the souls for which He died. Even Satan admits that "all that a man hath will he give for his life"; surely, then, I owe all to Him Who won eternal life for me by laying down His own life on the Cross.

II. He Himself besought His Father that even infinite love, if it were possible, might be in my heart towards Him and towards my fellow-men. "That the love wherewith thou hast loved Me may be in them," He said, praying thus that by His indwelling Presence I might be kindled to a love like the Father's own for Him. And without this love, which is the "fullness of God" (Eph. iii: 19), I might be perfectly moral, but I should be a house swept, garnished,—and *empty*, ready to be tenanted by demons. "Mind without love is devilish."

III. But when "the King shall reign and prosper"

in my heart "in righteousness," then shall I "be as an hiding-place from the tempest, as rivers of water in a dry place, as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land" (Isa. xxxii: 1 f.). The Royal Prophet takes his metaphor from the oasis, where the water from the spring will often start new herbage, which, however, quickly withers in the burning sun, unless it is sheltered in the shadow of a rock. Let me be to weaker souls a shadow of the Rock of Ages.



Monday after the Third Sunday in Lent

Bearing Little Crosses for Love's Sake. Read 2 Cor. iv: 8-12

I. Consider that God in the Scriptures shows us how we can save waste in our life by turning all to profit through love. It is done by a right use of the petty annoyances of daily life. Our Saviour did not confine His promises of reward to those who suffer martyrdom, or some other great affliction, for Him. "Because thou hast been faithful in a *very little*,"—on this condition He will give us power in His Kingdom of Love. It may be in the form of daily worries that my opportunity comes. "Every common day leads forth her duties, as every night leads forth her stars." My commonplace discomforts may therefore be turned to a galaxy of 'lights glorifying my Father Which is in Heaven.'

II. We can bear our Lord's Cross just as really in our obscure small way, as St. Paul did in all the sufferings of his ministry. The reward of increasing holiness is certain if we endure what our Lord places upon us, however small the cross. 'We are thronged on every side,' says that great sufferer for Christ; 'we find ourselves without a ford across the flood, we are

often knocked down, as by a missile' (2 Cor. iv: 8). All this happens to us as duties crowd upon us, or we meet some obstacle to our plans, or misfortune casts us down. And as we bear the same sufferings as St. Paul we are also entitled to his consolation. By our little troubles, we 'always bear about in our body the putting to death of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus may be made manifest in us.' By accepting my little crosses, therefore, I shall share the Passion of my Lord.

III. One rule of God's patient saints which I must remember when I suffer, is not to look beyond the evil of the day. "If you have an anxiety day by day," Bishop Wilkinson tells us, "God undertakes to see you through it, but only day by day." "As thy days, so shall thy strength be."



Tuesday after the Third Sunday in Lent

Doing Penance for Love's Sake.

Read St. Matt. v: 25-30

I. It is very acceptable to God when we bear the afflictions He sends us willingly and lovingly, as what we deserve for our sins. Jesus was scourged when He was perfectly innocent; shall not I endure chastisement gladly when I so justly merit it? Our Lord urges us to "agree," or, as the sense is, "compound," with our Divine Adversary, accusing us through conscience, while we are in the way with Him. Else, when we pass at death to the "spirits in prison," our Judge will demand of us, not as now, some light penance easily borne by love, but the "uttermost farthing" before we can come out thence. Like Lazarus, let me receive "evil things on earth," that I may be "comforted" in "Abraham's Bosom."

II. My Lord bids me be heroic, too, about voluntary penances to correct my sinful dispositions. 'If thy right eye scandalize thee, pluck it out; if thy hand scandalize thee, cut it off.' With this severe prescription of the Divine Physician in mind, St. Augustine exclaimed: "Here cut, here burn, here spare not, that I may find mercy for eternity!"

III. Yet the most powerful motive to take our sufferings willingly, and even impose them upon ourselves, in our Friday fasts and our Lenten rules of self-denial, is that thus we punish ourselves for our sin against God. St. Paul congratulated the Corinthians on having thus done penance for their complicity in the sin of their guilty fellow Christian. "What revenge [you took against yourselves]," is his applauding comment. It was in this spirit that Dr. Johnson stood for a long time bare-headed in the rain, at the place where his father's book-stall had been, because he had failed there in filial obedience.



Wednesday after the Third Sunday in Lent

Merit of Suffering Borne for Love's Sake. Read Job iii: 20-25

I. Be "rich toward God." This is the counsel of the great spiritual Capitalist, by which He means that we are to strive for the wealth of His Father's favor. Now by suffering I can amass a vast fortune of these divine riches. If we appear unto God to fast, our Saviour taught us, our Father will recompense us. We are to rejoice and be exceeding glad over persecution, slander and reproach, for great is our reward in Heaven. He, though He was the Eternal Son, yet said of Himself as Man, "Therefore doth My Father love Me because I lay down my life." I shall find no

better way than suffering to gain that same priceless treasure of my Father's love.

II. Our heavenly reward for affliction lovingly borne is our increasing goodness and piety. Do I not often receive a wonderful blessing from merely entering the presence of sufferers, because of the grace they have received through the "Sacrament of Pain"?

"I pray, O Master, let me lie
As on Thy bench the favored wood.
Thy saw, Thy plane, Thy chisel ply
And form me into something good."

Bishop Wilkinson, himself in great grief at the time, wrote as follows to a friend, "How happy it will be in that invisible Kingdom to see what each blow of the hammer really meant."

III. Like a good workman, our Saviour directs His stroke just where it is most needed. Job had often, in the days of his prosperity, shuddered at lepers, and especially at those with the fearful disease now called *elephantiasis*. Then it seems Jehovah let this very thing which he had greatly feared come upon him; but it was in order that, through it, Job might become more perfectly acceptable to Him, so that his intercession would avail as being that of a saint (Job xlii: 8).



Thursday after the Third Sunday in Lent

Suffering for Love of Others.

Read 2 Cor. i: 3-7

I. Not for myself only shall I learn to bear my cross after Jesus, but even more for Him and my fellow-men. There is a language of sympathy which I cannot learn except through experience of pain; and only when I have felt the nearness of my crucified

God in my own affliction can I impart to others the certainty that His rebukes and chastening are full of His love. Our Father "comforteth us in all our tribulations, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God."

II. To share with Jesus in His Passion is to help Him move the world Godward. "The pleasures of each generation evaporate in air," says Illingworth; "it is their pains that increase the spiritual momentum of the world."

III. St. Paul tells us, in the Greek of our passage for reading, something which ought, indeed, to make us welcome affliction with open arms: "The *sufferings of Christ* overflow unto us." No wonder He can add, "So through Christ overfloweth also our consolation." For it is a proud boast of the Christian that he shares God's pain. 'I bear on my body the brands of the Lord Jesus'; so St. Paul had described to the Galatians the noble insignia of His painful maladies. Disease, trouble, grief,—these are become, through the Cross, the glorious marks of our loyalty to our Captain. And they are also the afflictions by which we are able to bring consolation and even salvation to our brethren (*v. 6*). Can we not then be magnanimous enough to say, with Romanes,

"And Thou hast brought me through a wilderness of pain,
To love the sorest paths, if soonest they attain."



Friday after the Third Sunday in Lent

Suffering for Love of Others.

Read 1 Cor. iv: 6-13

I. There are millions of souls in this country whom the Gospel cannot reach because they have

been blinded by the god of this world. How can we help to save them? There is but one way: to suffer for them. We are to take example by Him Who died for us, and be ready even to lay down our lives in voluntary, willing, sacrifice for these our brethren (1 St. John iii : 16).

II. It is St. Paul who teaches us how we can plead for Christ with people who are unknown to us, who are quite out of our sphere, or far away from us. He first speaks of the apostles' sufferings, the labor, hunger and thirst, the reviling, slander and persecution they endured. Some of us may be permitted to know these in our own lives. Then, as summing up the whole, he says, "we are made as the *filth* of the world and are the *offscouring* of all unto this day." He is referring to a contemporaneous custom of the Athenians, who, each year, led to the brow of the cliff above the Piræus a convict from their city and cast him down into the sea as a propitiatory sacrifice. They called him the "filth" of Athens, and said over him, "Be thou our offscouring." Now St. Paul thinks of the apostles as like this victim, except that they had become the "offscouring" of *all*, and a sacrifice for the cleansing of the *whole world*.

III. Let me then offer my sufferings as a loving sacrifice, in union with Christ's Passion, for those who are being lost through their own indifference and sin. God will surely respond to my offering by some renewed pleading with them, some greater measure of actual grace given them, which may win them to repentance. Thus may my charity save immortal souls alive.



Saturday after the Third Sunday in Lent

Loving Reparation to Jesus.

Read Ezek. ix: 1-5

I. Our Lord was about to destroy Jerusalem for its incorrigible wickedness, but first He sent an angel to set a mark, a Hebrew letter in the form of a cross, on the foreheads of those who "sighed and cried" for the evil done in the city. In this He teaches us that we Christians ought to offer reparation to God by suffering for the coldness and wickedness of men's hearts. We are stamped with a cross, as the sign of our participation in His Passion; for the cross is the proper symbol of one who takes upon his heart the sins of others, and does penance for them as Jesus did on Calvary.

II. All God's most loving friends have been jealous for His honor, and eager to make up to Him for the daily indignities done to Him all over the world. The Psalmist says that his eyes gushed out with tears because men kept not God's law. Daniel, who had been a saint from his boyhood, in his holy old age took the sins of his people upon himself, and confessed them fasting in sackcloth and ashes. St. Bonaventura longed to be a Mordecai that he might stand at the gate of the King's Palace, the Church, and weep, that so he might repair the wounded honor of God, and ward off impending destruction from his people.

III. There is an ancient tradition that the woman Jesus cured of her bloody issue came afterwards to Him on His way to Calvary, and with her kerchief wiped His Face, disfigured by the foul treatment of His tormentors. Like St. Veronica I have been healed of a mortal wound, and still my Saviour is carrying His cross through the world. I will offer Him my heart's sympathy and love in reparation,

that so I may wipe away the insults heaped upon
Him from all sides.



Fourth Sunday in Lent

Christian Ambition.

Read Prov. vi: 6-11

I. Ambition is a vice only when I am grasping after that which will exalt myself in the sight of my fellow-men. There is a truer, Christian, ambition. It is the longing to attain that goal of perfection for which God created me; and this, not for gratification to myself, but for the glory which I may render to God. Our Lord does not call us to some tame and unexciting enterprise, but to the great adventure of giving all to gain all, of dying to self to live eternally in Him.

II. Really the difficulty with the majority of people is that they are not ambitious enough. What are all the riches of this world, through the longest life, compared with five minutes on the Throne of God with Jesus? Yet He Himself bids us aspire to this. "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with Me in My Throne, even as I overcame and am set down with My Father in His Throne."

III. I am to aspire ever more eagerly after perfect participation in Christ's strength and righteousness. What are the obstacles to this truly Christian ambition? One is *self-deceit*, which makes me take a much more favorable view of my spiritual state than I ought. I would not knowingly accept a counterfeit coin from another, in business life. Why is it that, in the spiritual sphere, I am content to palm off on myself a mere appearance of perfection? The surest sign that I am good is dissatisfaction with my own spiritual condition. *Procrastination* is another foe to

my progress. Twice over the Wise Man warns me against this, saying, "Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep; so shall thy poverty come as a robber, and thy want as an armed man" (Prov. vi: 10; xxiv: 33, R.V.), to rob me of the increase of holiness I might have gained.



Monday after the Fourth Sunday in Lent

Christian Quietness.

Read Ps. xcii.

I. The pagan Thessalonians had been restless busybodies and idle tale-bearers. Nor did they at their baptism wholly forsake these habits. St. Paul had to hold up before them the lofty Christian ideal: 'Be ambitious to be quiet, and to do your own business, and to work with your own hands, that ye may walk with dignity toward them that are outside [the Church]' (1 Thess. iv: 11 f.). This counsel presents to me also an object for earnest aspiration and effort. It is often hard to bear the monotony of life, to put up with tiresome people, to perform irksome duties. The temptation comes to find relief in sloth and gossip instead of going steadily on with my work.

II. Christ's example will greatly help me quietly to endure the dullness of routine, perhaps in the midst of uncongenial surroundings. Think, my soul, of His thirty years at Nazareth! He was Himself the perfect artist, musician, poet, and He spent His life among a people half-blind to beauty, deaf to the glorious harmonies which He heard, and unresponsive to His loveliest thoughts.

III. The Psalmist teaches me the blessedness of being planted as the Cross was, saying: "They that are planted in the House of the Lord, shall flourish

in the Courts of our God." As we set out young plants during the winter in some sunny window, until having got well started, they can in the spring be transplanted to the garden to bloom and blossom, so it is with souls. They must, through the winter of this life, be set in the warm atmosphere of the Church with the sunlight of God's grace upon them, that in the radiant springtime of the future life they may be transplanted by the Heavenly Gardener and flourish in the Courts of our God.



Tuesday after the Fourth Sunday in Lent

Christian Ambition—To be Poor with Christ. Read Phil. ii: 1-11

I. Christ loved spiritual poverty, and constantly progressed in it. We can distinguish three infinite descents which He made to reach utter abjection. The first was when, as it seems, He manifested Himself under the form of the Angel of the Presence (Isa. lxiii: 9), of Whom God said, "My Name," or "Character," "is in Him" (Ex. xxiii: 21); although He did not unite Himself indissolubly to the angelic nature as He did afterward to ours. At the Incarnation, again, He, Who was in the Form of God, descended infinitely into the poverty He loved, and took upon Himself the form of a servant. But even this would not content Him. He must become in His Passion, "a worm and no man, a very scorn of man and the outcast of the people." Shall not I try to follow my Lord, at however great a distance, into His blessed poverty of spirit?

II. There is an absolute and irreconcilable antipathy between pride and the Character of Christ. Speaking of some Israelitish tyrant, who was imposing

extortionate laws upon his people, the Psalmist asks our Lord, 'Wilt *Thou* have fellowship with the throne of wickedness which frameth mischief by statute?' (Ps. xciv: 20). How vivid was the contrast between this throne of petty arrogance and covetousness and the mercy-seat upon which Jehovah dwelt among His poor, sinful people, like a mother-bird upon her nest, only desiring to fill them with His grace! (Ps. lxxxix: 10.)

III. The divine love of poverty manifested itself again in the choice of Nazareth for Christ. On the return of the Holy Family from Egypt, St. Joseph would have taken Him to Bethlehem, the royal city of David, but he was warned in a dream that Jesus should dwell at Nazareth. Thus, all His life He was called a Nazarene, after the despised little village out of which, the common saying was, no prophet would proceed, nor could any good thing come.



Wednesday after the Fourth Sunday in Lent

Ambition to Hear Christ's Subtler Calls. Read Hosea ii: 19-25

I. My soul is the bride of Jesus. By the inspired voice of His prophet, He has declared to me, "I will betroth thee to Me forever; yea, I will betroth thee unto Me in righteousness, and in judgment, and in loving kindness and in mercies." But if I would really claim the blessing of these heavenly espousals I must hear the Voice of my Bridegroom, though He speaks in the softest whisper. And the pulse of my natural life, with its passions and claims, is ever beating in my ears, so that only a persistent straining of my spiritual hearing will keep me sensitive to the "still small Voice" which speaks in my heart.

II. The apostles received their call to the blessed union with Christ which they enjoyed because they had ears to hear the subtle, yearning note beneath what seemed His chance calls. When St. Andrew and St. John followed Him, He turned as if surprised and asked them, "What seek ye?" St. Peter and his brother received their final vocation to become apostles from Jesus as He was "walking by the sea," as if He was not thinking of calling them. St. Andrew and St. Philip went, as they supposed, on their own initiative to find St. Peter and St. Bartholomew. St. Matthew was called as he sat in his toll-house by our Lord "as He passed by" teaching the people, and thus seemingly in the most casual way. Yet every one of these vocations was according to the eternal purpose of God. "Ye have not chosen me," our Lord told the apostles, "but I have chosen you" (St. John xv: 16). Let me aspire to hear the more delicate harmonies of Christ's invitations above my "howling senses' ebb and flow."

III. Alertness to hear Jesus' slightest word is the true ambition of His bride. 'Come with Me, My spouse,' thus He woos my soul; 'come with Me from Lebanon, journey from the top of Amana, Shenir, and Hermon,' my beautiful, seductive, natural haunts, 'from the lions' den, from the mountains of the leopards,' the ravening perils which lurk among the lovely forests of self-will (Song of Songs iv: 8).



Thursday after the Fourth Sunday in Lent
Ambition to Conquer Our Besetting Sin. Read Ps. ix.

I. It was the night before the great battle with the Syrians, that David prayed in the words of this psalm. The enemy lay in two vast armies before

him; in his rear the Edomites were advancing on Jerusalem, so that Joab, his ablest general, with a great part of the royal army, had to be sent to meet them. He began his prayer by acknowledging his own utter weakness, and the certainty of Israel's defeat, unless their God would fight for them: "That Thy beloved may be delivered," he pleaded, "save with Thy Right Hand, and hear me." Through the frailty of my fallen nature I, like David, am helpless in the face of my besetting sin. God has 'made me to drink the wine of staggering,' because of my evil-doing. Yet the honor of my Saviour is entrusted to me. He has "given a banner to them that fear" Him; and when, like the royal Psalmist, I pray for help, I know that God will save with His Right Hand, Jesus Christ, and hear me.

II. No sooner had the king made his supplication than he foresaw the gracious answer of Jehovah. Already, before the battle was fought, there in his tent, David heard God speak in His holiness, saying, "I will exult, I will divide Shechem and mete out the valley of Succoth," the territory of Israel's enemies. Jehovah would indeed go forth to battle for His people, but He would unite them to Himself in the strife, taking them upon His Head and in His Hand. 'Ephraim' He declared, 'is the helmet of My Head, Judah is My scepter.' So did Christ take my nature upon Himself when He came forth in the Incarnation to do battle for me. Now David beheld Him, having returned victorious from the battlefield, refreshing Himself in His palace. He has reduced Israel's enemies to the most menial service: 'Moab is My foot-bath; unto Edom will I toss My sandal.'

III. By the end of his prayer, David had determined to go forth and attack the Edomites in

their stronghold, Selah, reputed an impregnable fortress. 'Who will bring me into the strong city,' he cried, 'who will lead me into Edom? Wilt not Thou, O God? Vain is the help of man, but God shall tread down our enemies.' Let me, like David, take the aggressive against the stronghold of my spiritual enemies, by increasing in the virtue opposite to my chief fault, and by foreseeing the occasions of it and praying and resolving against them.



Friday after the Fourth Sunday in Lent

Ambition for Spiritual Progress.

Read Num. xvii: 7-11; 1 Kings viii: 9

I. God chose for Aaron's rod an almond branch because this tree has earned its Hebrew name of "Early Waker," by being the first of all plants to bloom in the spring. And He loves the soul which watches and wakes for the rising of the Easter Sun of Righteousness to make for it glorious springtime. The rod of the chosen priest, when it was laid up before God in the Tabernacle, burst into bud and bloom and fruit all at once. In the same way a soul which Jehovah has chosen must have always some virtues bearing fruit, while others of later growth are yet only in bloom, and still others are just beginning to bud, in its fecund soil.

II. Aaron's rod, together with the pot of manna, was lost when the ark was left in the hands of the Philistines after they defeated unfaithful Israel. Only the tables of stone with the commandments written on them were left. So also an unfaithful Christian whose soul is no longer budding and blooming and fruitful, at last has only the cold letter of the law left to him.

III. This parable from the history of Aaron's rod is wonderfully supplemented by another which Incarnate Jehovah has told us in the Gospel (St. Mark iv: 28 f.). The soil of a soul made fertile by the grace of Christ bringeth forth, He said, "first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear." Spiritual progress, therefore, is slow and gradual. We must have patience with ourselves, even in our failings and sins. Yet with all our hearts we must desire that our Lord should work in us both to will and to do until He has brought our fruit to perfection. For "when the fruit is ripe, *immediately* He putteth in the sickle, because the harvest is come." How eager He is for it! How faithfully and lovingly I must strive to co-operate with this tender Husbandman of my soul, that at last He may bind up my sheaves and fill His Bosom (Ps. cxxix: 7).



Saturday after the Fourth Sunday in Lent

Ambition for More Righteousness.

Read Isa. xlv: 8-12

I. There is no limit to the saintliness which my Lord will give me except the limit which I impose upon Him by the perversity of my will. He has from all eternity prepared for me grace in as great abundance as He has foreknown I would permit Him to bestow it upon my soul. He has endowed me with sanctifying grace, through my baptism and my other sacraments; He inspires and assists me with actual graces, so that I am "thoroughly furnished unto every good work," and then rewards these works by giving me an increase of righteousness, as if I had earned it myself. Thus the Royal Prophet in our passage for reading says, "Drop down [the dew of holiness], ye Heavens, from above and let the skies pour down righteousness;

let the earth [of our hearts] open, and let them bring forth salvation." It only needs, therefore, that my poor earthly nature should open, and it shall receive the rain which renews the face of the earth.

II. I can merit an increase of righteousness from Him who thus gladly pours His benefits upon me, by doing little works of love, little tasks in the spirit of divine charity. My Lord gives me a share in His own holiness, for the sake, not only of some great enterprise for His glory, but for giving, it may be, a glass of cold water, if only it be done in the "name," or "character," of a disciple.

III. There is a tremendous development of spirituality possible for me through little acts of charity or devotion. It is the accumulation of grace in my soul resulting from a chain of such meritorious works, small as each one of them is in itself, which can in the end make of me one of God's obscure saints. "As time is made up of moments, so life mostly of small actions whose greatness lies in their combination." And the divine content of a single tiny act of love may be limitless, because out of that one deed, a habit of such acts is to be developed in my life.



Passion Sunday

The Passion, the Remedy for Sick Souls. Read Num. xxi: 4-9

I. Before we enter upon Passontide we must fix deeply in our minds the fact that it was God who shed His Blood and gave His human life for souls on the Cross. "In Christ dwelt all the fullness of the God-head Bodily." "God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself." "Our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ gave Himself for us." In these and many other passages the sacred writers seek to im-

press upon us Who the Sufferer was. We are "the Church of God which He purchased with His own Blood." He who holds twenty thousand suns in the hollow of his Hand saved us, not by power but by the suffering of his love.

II. Thus "the mighty God" made Himself, in false trial, scourging, Cross-bearing, and ultimately crucifixion, the Scorn of men and Outcast of the people, nay, a worm and no man. It was this thought that made St. Francis of Assisi take up a worm out of the highway and set it in safety. He could not bear that any harm should come to that which Christ had made a type of Himself. Let the thought of the divine abjection once come home to my heart, and from that moment at least every person will suggest Christ to me, so that I would not injure myself or my neighbor by my sin.

III. The Cross is to me what the brazen serpent, twined around its cross, was to the people of God when in the wilderness they were bitten by fiery serpents. But God gives me Himself crucified to be the Remedy of my soul, saying, "Look unto Me and be saved." "I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me."



Monday in Passion Week

The Cross the Measure of God's Love. Read Eph. iii: 17-21

I. St. Paul bids us comprehend what is the length and breadth and depth and height of the love of Christ. Surely the Cross is the measure we must use in this inquiry. The *length* of divine charity is described when it is said of the Passion, that Jesus having loved His own loved them to the end; that is, to the uttermost of the limitless love of God.

II. The *breadth* of God's love in the Passion is limited only by the bounds of our race. "All souls are Mine." "He tasted death for every man." He foresaw even my soul with those Divine Eyes looking down the ages, and when He saw me, He loved me and gave Himself for me.

III. How dare I think of the *depth* to which God condescended in His love! He was made a curse, for "cursed is everyone that hangeth on a tree." But even this is not the most terrible abyss into which He descended that He might 'love my soul up out of the pit.' He "was made to be sin for us." The whole great fearful mass of the world's evil, in all the ages of its existence, from first to last, was rolled on the immaculate human Soul of Jesus. No wonder the Psalmist, struggling to express divine charity, says that God's loving-kindness is "unto the Heavens," Our Lord, too, told, yet more fully, the unspeakable love which with His Father He felt for us. In His High-priestly prayer He said: "Thou hast loved them as Thou hast loved Me"; and of His own charity for our souls He declared, "As the Father hath loved Me, so have I loved you."



Tuesday in Passion Week

Courage from the Cross (1).

Read St. John xix: 38-42

I. Schiller, in spite of his unbelief, thus apostrophises our Faith: "Religion of the Cross! Thou alone dost interweave the twin strands of humility and strength." We shall be thinking of these intertwined fundamental elements of the Christian character. To consider first the courage which is the iron of the Christlike temperament, three persons are delineated

in the Gospels, one of whom had strength to begin, the second to advance, and the third to die, for Christ, through the fortitude which came to them from the Cross. St. Joseph of Arimathæa, who had been a disciple "but secretly for fear of the Jews," when now our Lord had died on the gibbet, found the courage to begin his open fellowship with Jesus. 'Having *dared*, he went in to Pilate and begged the Body of Jesus' (St. Mark xv: 43). What a picture the evangelist presents to us of this Jewish Sanhedrist in his own house, alone, struggling with himself until at last he had courage to come out publicly for the Lord Who had so fearlessly suffered for him!

II. Nicodemus, another ruler of the Jews, came first to Jesus by night as a shrinking, timid student afraid to commit himself. Afterwards he had the boldness to speak out against the injustice of condemning Christ without a hearing; but he seems to have shrunk back into himself again before the curt sarcasm of his fellow Sanhedrists. Only when the Cross had been lifted up before his eyes on Calvary did he who "at the first came to Jesus by night" bring, in the broad daylight, an hundred pounds of spices to anoint His Body.

III. St. Stephen was, as it seems, led to his death along the Way of the Cross, for the place of execution lay close to Calvary. And there, within sight of the sacred knoll, he was so emboldened by the associations which clung around it, that he poured out his life for Christ freely and gladly. "The stones of the torrent were sweet to him." With my Lord's Passion before my eyes, I also shall have courage to begin and progress, and to finish my course, for His dear sake and the glory of His saving Cross.



Wednesday in Passion Week

Courage from the Cross (11).

Read Rom. viii: 35-39

I. Our Lord realized and surpassed all human conceptions of dauntless intrepidity. Soldiers describe the awful strain which the boldest heart feels in the moments of waiting before the order to charge is given. But Christ endured that strain unflinchingly for thirty years. We think of that "gallant gentleman" who left the Scott Expedition and went out *alone* into the storm, that by the sacrifice of himself he might save his fellows from famishing. But what a storm was that to which our Lord went forth alone in His Passion! And all the suffering, ignominy, and the fearful weight of the world's sin, were assumed by the Captain of our salvation *deliberately*, while He had absolute power to will it all away out of His path. "No man taketh [My life] from me, but I lay it down of Myself."

II. With such a Leader how great should be my courage! The motives which make me timid are self-interest and fear of pain. I shrink from the loss which absolute loyalty to Christ may involve, or I fear that I shall have to suffer pain if I take His side without compromise. But, as St. Augustine has said, "[Christ] came to reveal the nothingness of all earthly goods by doing without them, the dreadlessness of all that man naturally fears by bearing it."

III. When I realize the love which burns in Jesus as he endures His Passion, who shall be able to separate me from Him? 'Shall tribulation or distress or persecution, evil angels or any creature, life or death, separate me from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord?' It was through the love evoked by the Crucified that the primitive Christians

overcame the cruelty of the Roman Empire. "By this sign [they] conquered," says Harnack, "for on all human things, on what was eternal and on what was transient alike, Christianity had set the Cross."

Thursday in Passion Week

Charity from the Cross.

Read Eph. vi: 10-17

I. Even the God-man learned to be touched in His human Heart with a deeper feeling of others' infirmities through the experience of His own natural, inevitable human weakness. When in the Garden His Soul had been so crushed with the burden assumed, that His Body was cast down prostrate on the earth, and the Sweat of Blood poured forth, He sought to extenuate the infirmity of His three intimate friends when He returned and found them overcome with sorrow, and sleeping after He had bidden them watch with Him. "The spirit indeed is willing," He said, excusing them, "but the flesh is weak." Thus He teaches me to use the discovery of my own weakness to make me more ready to excuse others.

II. On His Head the Blessed Saviour wore a crown of thorns. These were such thorns, the Greek shows, as those of which He spoke in his parable of the sower. They remind us, therefore, of the thorns which grow up amid the tender young crop of our virtues and threaten to choke them. They recall, also, those which were the fruit of His vineyard, that is of His chosen people. Yet He wore them as His royal diadem in His Passion, to teach us meekness towards those who spoil our best plans and turn our hoped-for success into failure.

III. Jesus would not think of His human persecutors, except to pray for them. The tense of the

Greek verb used in St. Luke xxiii: 34 (translated "said") indicates that before His judges, and perhaps all along during His trials and His Cross-bearing to Calvary, He had been saying over and over, "Father forgive them for they know not what they do." He saw, beyond the Jewish people, Satan, His true arch-enemy. '*Satan* hath desired and hath obtained you to sift you as wheat,' was His explanation of the flight of His disciples. It was the hour of the power of darkness which He discerned behind the wagging heads and the insults of his human persecutors. Do I remember always that I 'wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against the world-rulers of this darkness?' (Eph. vi: 12.)



The Compassion of the Blessed Virgin

Suffering in Fellowship with the Crucified.

Read St. John xix: 23-27

I. The proof of truest sympathy with our Lord is willingness to share His suffering. For "sympathy" means "suffering with" another; "compassion" is claiming our right to endure a "passion with" our Master. That is why we find the Virgin Mother and the other women with St. John, the Apostle of Love, keeping guard around our Lord on the Cross. They loved Him, therefore they must perforce endure His ignominy and desolation with Him. And the answering sympathy of Him to Whom I am bound by the tie of suffering will sustain me through all pain of body or mind. A marvelous power flowed out from the sublime Hero in the midst of that little group on Calvary. Never was there a mother with the tenderness of Mary, and never did a mother behold a Son like Jesus suffering a death agony comparable to the

Crucifixion. Yet the Blessed Virgin “*stood by the cross*” while the sword pierced through her heart, because she was sustained by her strong spiritual sympathy with her Divine Son. I also am in special fellowship with Him when I suffer. “*Lo,*” He says, “*I am with him in trouble.*” “*In all [my people’s] afflictions I am afflicted.*”

II. Often we see in those who have been chronic sufferers a wonderful knowledge of our Lord’s mind. A striking Scriptural example of this is the patriarch Job, who gained the first clear revelation of Easter through leprosy, calamity, and grief. We behold him mounting in the earlier chapters of his book to ever higher and higher planes of faith, until at length he bursts out triumphantly, ‘*I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that He shall stand at the latter day upon the earth; and though, after my death, worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God, Whom I shall see for myself and mine eyes shall behold.*’ (Job xix: 25 f.)

III. Suffering is a love-token from the Crucified, a splinter from His Holy Cross, a thorn from His royal crown. It is the very way in which the obedience of His human Will was perfected (Heb. vi: 8), and therefore suffering in union with Him becomes a most effectual means of our development into likeness to Him. “*Whom I love,*” He tells us, “*I rebuke and chasten.*”



Saturday in Passion Week

Humility a Gift from the Cross.

Read St. John xix: 17-22

I. Christian humility is far from meanspiritedness. Ruskin speaks of it as the first test of greatness, and says that it does not prevent great men from knowing

and exercising their own ability. But "they have a curious sense of powerlessness, feeling that greatness is not *in* them, but *through* them, that they could not be or do anything else than God made them, and they see something divine and God-made in every other man they meet." To crucify self, as we learn to do by looking up in love to the Cross, is to set free a divine energy within us. "I am crucified with Christ, yet nevertheless I live, yet not I but Christ liveth in me."

II. To stimulate humility in ourselves, let us consider the title which Pilate was divinely guided to set above the Head of Jesus on the Cross. Like every other detail of the Passion it was predetermined by our Lord in order to carry to the uttermost the humiliation He freely chose to undergo. It hung about His Neck on the Way of Sorrows as though He were indeed a malefactor. How should we love to bear reproach with Him!

III. "Jesus," is written there, not "Christ," because Jesus was a common Jewish name. Indeed our Lord seems to have shared it with Barabbas, since Pilate said unto the people, "Will ye that I release unto you [Jesus] Barabbas, or Jesus which is called Christ?" "Christ," "the anointed one," was the majestic title of the Messiah. "Of Nazareth," not "of Bethlehem," the City of David, the inscription continues, and Nazareth was the despised village of the despised province of Galilee. "King of the Jews" is the satirical description of this Monarch, with a crown made of thorns and a spike for a sceptre and mounted upon the rough beams of a Cross for His throne.



Palm Sunday

The Church Revealed in the Passion. Read St. Matt. xiii: 47-52

I. Our Lord has revealed to us through the Scriptures that the Catholic Church derives her very existence from the Passion of her Saviour. She is His mystical Body. As our wise theologian, Hooker, declares, she "is formed out of the very Flesh, the very woundde and bleeding Side, of the Son of Man." Jesus is "the Head," St. Paul teaches, "to the Church, which is His Body, the fullness of Him that filleth all in all." One principal purpose of the Passion, therefore, from the Agony in Gethsemane, through the Trials and the Cross-bearing along the Dolorous Way, to the last sigh of the Divine Victim, was that, by the infinite merit of every added pang, He should store up ever more and more grace to be the "fullness" of His Body, the Church.

II. We may apply to this truth several of the parables in Holy Scripture about the Church. Thus the fish-net, to which He compared the Kingdom of Heaven, may represent His Body, riddled with Wounds, which is let down into the troubled waters of this world to gather in souls for Him. The wide opening through which I was received into Him at my baptism I can think of as the spear-wound in His Heart.

" Hide us in Thy dear Heart,
O Jesu, Saviour blest,
So shall we find Thy plenteous grace
And Heaven's eternal rest."

III. Again, the names of all Christians are said to be written in the *Lamb's Book of Life*. My name was written there when I was made a Christian. These souls, except they fall away and are blotted out

of the Book, shall never be cast into the lake of fire, which is the second death. But it was only for the sake of the merits of the Crucified that our names could ever be written there, in the Heart of God.



Monday in Holy Week

Conversion Through the Passion. Read the First Psalm.

I. There are three descending steps in the way that leads to destruction, and the Psalmist declares the blessedness of the souls which have been rescued from this downward path. Now our Lord performed three miracles by which the dead were restored to life, and spiritual writers interpret these as manifesting His power to lift up souls from those three degrees of mortal sin. Thus, first those who walk in the counsel of the ungodly, having but just begun their evil course by consenting to the world in some more common way, like the use of flattery, or of "tricks of the trade," need the touch of the scarred Hand of Jesus. As He took the hand of Jairus's daughter who was only just dead, and by His command instantly recalled her spirit, so it is only He Who can lift up these who have but lately died to new life, by His Voice and Touch recalling their spirits to Him.

II. Those who "stand in the way of sinners" have grown used to the broad, pleasant highway which leads to destruction. These turn quickly away from the rebuke of conscience, eager for the distractions of society. They "stand in the way," where sinners will find them. Like the son of the widow of Nain, they are not dead only, but are outside the City, being borne along to the grave. Nevertheless, let our Saviour pass by and find these dead souls; He came

this way just to raise them, as we read, He "came into the world to save sinners." Let Him say to them, "Poor souls, arise!" If He but touch them with His Voice and His grace they will revive and He will deliver them to their Mother Church.

III. Deepest of all in the pit are those who "sit in the seat of the scornful." They have learned to laugh at sin, and take the world's cynical tone about religion and goodness. By their ridicule, they make it hard for Christians to stand up boldly for Jesus. These idlers in the seats of the scornful, like Lazarus, have been dead four days. But by the touch of Christ through His ministers they may come forth and be loosed. Like dead bodies bound with grave clothes their souls cleave to the dust and are bound hand and foot by sin, yet the pitifulness of Jesus' great mercy will loose them and set them on their way towards the heavenly Jerusalem.



Tuesday in Holy Week

Prayer Taught Us in the Passion. Read St. Matt. xxvii : 45-51

I. God, speaking through the prophet Zechariah (xii : 10), tells us that when we look upon Him Whom we have pierced, He will pour out upon us the Spirit of grace and of supplication. It is instinctive for devout souls to pray when they see a cross, because they feel the impulse to do what Jesus is doing there, so manifest is His love of God and His desire and infinite longing after His Father. As we look up to Him on the Cross, let us think of Him as praying in the words of the psalms which we may use in our prayer. Saints have thought that, having said "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" the first words of the twenty-second psalm, He went on to

repeat all that follows, until, coming to the fifth verse of the thirty-first psalm, He cried, "Into Thy Hands I command My Spirit," and gave up His human Spirit into His Father's Hands.

II. The rent veil of the temple was God's object-lesson to His ancient people, to teach them that since the Death upon the Cross they could, the poorest or meanest of them, enter into the Holy of Holies and meet Him Face to face. The rending took place just at the moment of our Lord's Death, because God would set forth the great lesson that now we have "a new and living way" into the Holiest through the veil of Jesus' Flesh which He hath consecrated for us.

III. Ever since Calvary, we have been concluding our prayers by saying to God that we offer our petition, our praise, or our thanksgiving, "*through* Jesus Christ our Lord." Not even the Our Father, since it was given before the first Good Friday, could end by pleading "*through Christ*." But the night before Calvary our Lord said, "*Hitherto have ye asked nothing in My name.*" "*Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in My Name, He will give it you.*" Since then, we make in every prayer through the Passion an absolute claim on the Heart of our Heavenly Father, because we plead the sacrifice of His dear Son.



Wednesday in Holy Week

Going Forth from Lent Crucified with Christ.

Read Heb. xiii: 11-15

I. Our Saviour, as the Sin-offering, Who would sanctify His people with His own Blood, suffered without the gate of Jerusalem. The bullock which typified Him in the Old Testament sacrifices might

not be consumed by the sacred fire in the temple; the carcass was dragged outside the city walls and consumed in Gehenna with common fire. The divine Antitype perfectly fulfilled this, as He did every other part of His Old Testament rule; He made Himself unclean with our sin, and was carried outside the city and there consumed, in the dark valley of abjection and agony. He carried His Cross through the most fashionable of Jerusalem's suburbs, with villas and palaces on both sides of Him,—*The Suburb*, it was called. If I am to "go forth to Him without the camp, bearing His reproach," what detachment from the world, what self-surrender to God, what a consumption of my selfishness by the fire of love during the rest of the Church year, will likeness to the Crucified mean!

II. 'Walked we not,' was St. Paul's challenge to his detractors, 'in the same Spirit; walked we not in the same Footsteps as Christ?' I also must journey as my Lord, walking in His own Spirit, an *alter Christus*. For here have I no continuing city; I seek that heavenly Jerusalem which is to come, and the way to it is that wherein Christ leads me, the Way of the Cross.

III. By our Lord Jesus Christ crucified, St. Paul declares, "the world is crucified into me, and I unto the world." He conceives himself to be another Christ on his cross and the world as being crucified before Him, like the wicked thief before our Lord. Let me resolve that I also will look upon the evil world as nailed to a cross and dead to me, while I share the crucifixion of my Lord and die to the wickedness of the world.



Maunday Thursday

The Christian Passover.

Read St. Luke xxii: 14-20

I. A study of the passage we have taken for reading to-day reveals a long-buried truth about the Holy Communion which our Lord consecrated for the first time on this solemn feast. "With desire," He said, "have I desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer." He did not mean by this the unleavened cakes and the wine and roasted lamb of the Jewish festival, for He put all of this away from Him, saying "I will not eat thereof," "I will not drink of the fruit of the vine." The Passover He so longed to eat with that little nucleus of His Church was the Christian Passover of the Blessed Sacrament.

II. Out of the five cups of wine which were taken by the Jewish families during their passover meal the third was called the Cup of Blessing. This our Lord chose and also some of the unleavened wheaten cakes before Him, and having consecrated them He made them the sacramental means through which He gave us the sacrificed Lamb of the Christian Church. His sacred Blood is struck on the door-posts of our senses, that the Angel of Death may pass us by; and, for strength in our pilgrimage through the wilderness, we consume the Blessed *Agnus Dei*, prepared for our feast in the furnace of His Passion, whole in each fragment of the Blessed Sacrament.

III. Jesus' Heart broke with grief on the Cross because He "came unto His own, and His own received Him not." But in Its very breaking, It poured out one last Stream of sacred Blood, which has flowed down the ages, across continent after continent, until in my communion it was transfused into my heart, to fill it with the very life and love of its Holy Fountain-head.

Good Friday

The Sin Bearer.

Read Isa. i: 1-17

I. To-day I behold God offering Himself in the most cruel and ignominious death for the sins of His people. Only He could expiate the wickedness of the world. The Passion must be the suffering of God, else it would not be infinitely meritorious of the forgiveness of our sin, the malice of which is infinite in that it is the rejection of an infinite love.

II. Let me consider what were the sufferings of Him Who did penance for my sins. Before He ever reached the Cross His whole Head was sick, His whole Heart faint; 'from the Sole of His Foot unto the Crown of His Head there was no soundness, but wounds and bruises and sores.' These words of the prophet as first used described God's unhappy people, but the Sin Bearer endured it all, as the Son of Man, the Representative of our race. Taking our whole human nature, He received upon His Head and Back, His Hands and Feet and Heart, the fearful "chastisement of our peace." As His Body suffered so did also His Spirit, only a thousand times more. "Nazareth had rejected Him, Galilee had refused Him, Jerusalem had spurned Him, His disciples had forsaken Him, Judas had betrayed Him, St. Peter had denied Him." The darkness gathered about His Head; and the sun was hidden, as if nature would symbolize the setting of the Sun of Righteousness. The soldiers came to Him with mockery and offered Him a goblet that He might drink with them; as the Gospel says, "They came to Him, offering Him vinegar, mocking Him." The Jews wrung His Heart again and again with the temptation to come down and thereby gain their conversion. Last of all His

Father withdrew the *consolation* of His Presence from the Sacred Heart of this naked, desolate One, Who had made Himself leprous with our sins.

III. Oh, what an extravagant, lavish, prodigal love for Christ I ought to have! He might have saved the world by dying in a soft bed, sinking back gently into the arms of His holy angels, with all His beloved apostles standing about to comfort Him. But this would not satisfy the overflowing love of His Heart. Nothing less than the most extreme tortures of that "vilest death penalty" would content Him; it must be the execution of a slave and a convict, prolonged until the last drop of His precious Blood had been drained out of His wide-open Heart. And it was all for me!



Holy Sabbath

Spiritual Life is the Life that has Passed through Death.

Read 1 St. Peter iii: 15-20

I. The scene at the Holy Sepulchre betokens Christ's weakness. There is the cold, still Body in the rock-hewn chamber, which is not His Own, and at the door the guard, and the great stone sealed to confine Him. But what a contrast to all this is presented to the eyes of our faith. They can see that the Sepulchre is the abode of angels keeping watch, that the Scripture may be fulfilled which says, "His rest shall be glorious." Thus in proportion as our lower nature is put to death, our spirit becomes glorious in the sight of God.

II. At the very moment of the sepulture of His Body, Jesus' Spirit was in the Arms of God, triumphant, radiant with eternal light. Even now, through the mortification of "the old man" within me, "the

new man is created in righteousness and true holiness," and receives the divine welcome.

III. But the Soul of our Saviour was not to remain idle. It was 'quickened' and sent immediately to preach to the spirits saved under the Old Testament dispensation. As His human Spirit, indissolubly united to His Godhead, approached the gates of Hades, the radiant chior of angels around Him sang the summons: "Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lifted up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of Glory shall come in." Then from the trembling demons who kept the prison-house came the startled question, "Who is this King of Glory?" and back from the glorious company of the Conqueror rolled the sweet, clear answer, "The Lord, strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle," and the refrain, "Lift up your heads, O ye gates." Unwilling to believe, the demons reiterated their question, and once more the reply of the angels began, but it was interrupted. For the Lord of Hosts, with one touch of the Cross He carried had broken the gates of brass and smitten the bars of iron in sunder. I can make Jesus' triumph against evil my own, if only my carnal self is dead, and my soul is armed with His Cross and united to God.



Easter Day

The Queen of Feasts.

Read 1 Cor. xv: 12-20

I. This day offers us the greatest measure of joy our souls can know. Let us first think of its radiant happiness in contrast with the dark night which would fill our world had not Christ risen. Our faith would be vain, for the supposed heralds of God's truth would have been found false; our beloved dead, having perished

utterly, would never rise from the dust; we would be of all men the most miserable. And when our hearts have fully realized what would be the total gloom of a world without a risen Christ, then let them leap up at St. Paul's clarion note of triumph: "But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first fruits of them that are asleep." Victory is ours. "We are more than conquerors through Him that loved us."

II. The risen Christ is the foundation of the Church, with its saving Word and sacraments. Only by His triumph over death were His scattered disciples gathered together once more in courage and joy, and, from timid peasants, converted into confessors and martyrs. Through the Church the power of the resurrection for the regeneration of mankind has been extended, and constantly widened and deepened, by her ministrations to souls throughout the Christian ages. A fine example and symbol of the redemption wrought by Christ through His mystical Body is the Cathedral at Zanzibar, for it is built over a slave market, and its high altar is set where for centuries of Arab rule there had been a bloody whipping-post. The Christ of Eastertide has set the captive free.

III. All true instincts of the human heart find their satisfaction in our glorious risen Jesus. In these modern days the wonders bound up in the material of the universe occupy us much, and our minds demand that matter should not be lost. But where is matter conserved as in the Resurrection, where it became the royal robe of Incarnate God for eternity? And thus has it become holy to us also. Through the Resurrection the very bells on our horses and the pots of our kitchens are sanctified (Zech. xiv: 21). But the power which flows out from Easter to con-

secrete minds and wills by grace is the greatest miracle of the Queen of Feasts. It has made possible such conversions of souls, that St. Paul could confidently demand of thieves not only that they steal no more and that they labor for their own living, but that they become alms-givers (Eph. iv: 28). The power of the Resurrection alone can turn robbers into lovers and benefactors of their fellow-men.



Monday in Easter Week

Christ's Joy in His Resurrection for Our Sake. Read Ps. cxlii.

I. Of our Lord's pleading with His Father in Gethsemane the night before He suffered on the Cross, with such intensity of supplication that it crushed the Blood out of His Heart, St. Paul says: 'He offered up prayers and supplications, with strong crying and tears unto Him that was able to save Him *out from* death, and was heard for His godly fear' (Heb. v: 7). We are not told that our Saviour prayed to be saved *from dying*; had that been His petition it might not have been said that He "was heard." He prayed to be brought "*out from death*" by the resurrection from the grave. The "cup" was indeed to pass from Him, but only after He had drained it to the dregs.

II. Our Lord rested in the sepulchre for three days, any portion of the twenty-four hours constituting a day, according to the Bible method of computing time. Then, "very early" Easter morning, He 'came forth as a bridegroom out of His chamber and as a giant rejoiced to run his course.' His rejoicing was for our sake; He 'waked as one out of sleep, and like a mighty man that shouted by reason of wine,' but the exultant joy of this Giant was not in His own

Strength and Beauty; it was because by His resurrection He smote His enemies and ours, 'and put them to a perpetual reproach.' The Bridegroom Who came forth from his rock-hewn chamber on Easter morning rejoices at the new life He is to give to souls.

III. St. Francis of Assisi especially loved our psalm because it told of Christ's Easter joy. Its last verse, which was on the Saint's lips just before he died, is the prayer of our Lord to the Father while His Soul was still in the "prison-house" (1 St. Peter iii : 19). "Bring my soul out of prison," He cries "that it may give thanks to Thy Name: the righteous *shall crown themselves* because of Me; for Thou shalt deal bountifully with Me" (Ps. cxlii : 7, R. V. marg.).



Tuesday in Easter Week.

Our Joy for, and with, Our Lord in His Resurrection.

Read Acts xxvi : 12-18

I. Our Saviour reproached His apostles because when He told them that He was soon to depart from their sight unto His Father, they were sorrowful, foreseeing the loss *they* were about to suffer. "If ye loved Me," was his rebuke, "ye would rejoice because I said I go unto the Father." Am I giving to Christ a generous share of my sympathy this Eastertide? Is my heart full of disinterested rejoicing over my Lord's happiness, now when He has broken the bonds of death and is very soon to ascend to His Father, where for the first time His Humanity will know the ineffable glory which His Godhead has possessed with the Father before the world was?

II. When I reflect upon the aggressive unbelief our Lord met with constantly from His enemies, and

the incredulity which He found even in all His friends, excepting His blessed mother, what a happiness it is to me to place over against this rejection and doubt the triumphant vindication of my Lord's claims on Easter Day. He was "declared to be the Son of God with power by the resurrection of the dead" (Rom. i: 4, R.V.). St. Paul means by this inclusive phrase which he uses of the general resurrection, that, in our Lord's triumph over the power of the grave, was involved the resurrection of all men, so that Christ was on Easter proclaimed before all the world as God, having in His Hand the keys of Hell and Death, with power to release whom He will from their captivity.

III. The risen Humanity of our Lord was spiritualized, and thus endowed with the most glorious and majestic qualities which we can conceive of as in any creation of God. His Body had *clarity*, or radiance, above that of the sun at midday (Acts xxvi: 13). It possessed *agility*, or a speed so great that it could pass with the rapidity of light from Jerusalem to the Emmaus road. By *subtlety* our Lord was able to pass through stone, or the wall of the upper room. But it is especially His *impassibility* over which we rejoice, for by this quality He is forever free from pain.



Wednesday in Easter Week

The Risen Christ Our Life.

Read Gen. v: 19-24

I. Such was the power of our Lord's life that He could not be holden, even by those chains of death which are irrefragable by mortals. By that mighty life His Body was instantly quickened, "very early" Easter morning, and freed Itself from the linen bands that were wound about It, from the hundredweight of spices which had held It down, and from the sep-

ulchre, closed with a great stone. Yet so easily did His life accomplish this, that the napkin which had been on His Head lay where it had fallen together (St. John xx: 7). We, by virtue of our baptism, "are members of His Body, of His Flesh, and of His Bones" (Eph. v: 30), and that same risen life of Christ flows into us with all its mighty and yet subtle efficacy, nourishing our soul and body, so that like our Lord's they cannot be holden of death.

II. I perceive, therefore, how fatal it would be for me to lapse from the sacraments of Holy Church by which this immortal life is nourished. My life is hid with Christ, and, therefore, I fall back into death if I am separated from Him. I have His own word, "Apart from me, ye can do nothing" (St. John xv: 5). The figure our Lord uses in this warning illustrates His meaning clearly, for He has just spoken of Himself as the Vine of which we are branches, showing that we are nourished by the sap of His grace; and He continues by telling us that if we are broken off from the parent Vine we shall wither away and be cast into the fire.

III. The Fathers used to point to the example of Enoch as teaching us that if we are to be "translated" we must make Christ the centre of our spiritual life. Enoch during the three hundred and sixty-five years of his life ever walked with God until at last he "was not, for God took him." The primitive Fathers applied this to mean that during the three hundred and sixty-five days of our year we must live with Incarnate God, until He has communicated to us the immortal life. It is only mortality and sin which weigh us down to earth, and He will take them both away.



Thursday in Easter Week

The Risen Christ Delivering Us from Death.

Read 1 Cor. xv: 21-26

I. The literal meaning of the first verse in this passage from the Epistle to the Corinthians is: 'Since *through* man came death, also *through* Man came the resurrection of the dead.' St. Paul's thought is that death originally came from Satan and not from God, through the first Adam, and that God's reprisal for this spoiling of His plan of creation was the gift of the resurrection life. And as death came through man, the first Adam, so life also comes through Man, the Incarnate Saviour, the second Adam. Death is Christ's enemy, and, although it shall be the last one of His enemies to survive, yet it shall be destroyed when all things are put under His Feet (xv: 26 f.).

II. Surely nothing so mars the joy of life as the fear of its inevitable end. St. Paul felt this natural dread and gave expression to it in 2 Corinthians v: 4, as well as in other places. He would fain not be "unclothed," by death uncovering his naked soul, but he longed to be "*clothed upon*," that mortality might be swallowed up of life." He *hoped* always that he might be one of those who would be alive at the Lord's coming and who would not die but only be changed and caught up to meet Christ in the air (1 Cor. xv: 51 f.). But in captivity he came to want to be made conformable to Jesus in His death, if thereby he might attain to a resurrection like his Lord's (Phil. iii: 10). It is through contemplation of Christ risen, and our hope of being in some measure like Him in glorious, immortal radiance, that we can overcome the fear of dying so completely as to say with the Apostle, "To me, death is gain."

III. Dr. Pusey tells us how his little daughter, dying of tuberculosis and in great pain, was wonderfully comforted, so that her face was full of light and wreathed with smiles, even after she was dead. Her eyes were turned as though towards Someone by her father's side but unseen by him, and he felt sure that it was Jesus in His Easter beauty.



Friday in Easter Week

The Risen Christ Breaking the Power of Sin.

Read Zech. xii: 11-xiii: 1

I. My spiritual enemies are also His Who sits at God's Right Hand. "Sit thou on My Right Hand," the Father said unto Him at His Ascension, "until I make Thine enemies Thy foot-stool." Therefore I ought never to tremble or despair, when Satan persecutes me with his temptations. But if I should be cowardly and weak enough to give way, there is still a "fountain" of living water "for sin and for uncleanness," in the pierced Side of Jesus. (Zech. xiii: 1.)

II. Were it possible for some power of evil to extinguish the truth of Easter I should be left hopeless and despairing before the multitude of my sins. "If Christ be not raised," St. Paul declares, "ye are yet in your sins." If I were deprived of this "day which the Lord hath made," I should be a prey forever to that sin which is the "sting of death." "But thanks be to God Who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." To him who is absolved from sin the bitterness of death is passed.

III. Besides this power of the Risen One which protects me from my spiritual enemies and saves me from sin, there is also for me in the Resurrection that

which fills my heart with virtues and graces, and above all with the love of Jesus risen. I learn at this holy season that my soul is not a mere, cold, empty tomb. I, too, am risen, and my soul is like that large upper room, where I can meet Him in the glory of His Resurrection and give to Him of the honey-comb of my love. (St. Luke, xxiv: 4.)



Saturday in Easter Week

Devotion of Self to the Risen Christ. Read St. James i: 16-21

I. "Every good giving," says this "brother" of our Lord, "and every perfect gift is from above and cometh down from the Father." Every perfect gift is included for us in Him Who conquered the grave. Once, during His public ministry He expressed this truth to the Jews in a single sentence full of inexhaustible meaning. "The Kingdom of Heaven," He said, "is in the midst of you" (St. Luke xvii: 21, A.V. marg.). There, in the center of their group, was One Who comprehended within Himself all the blessings of Heaven. And my response to all God's perfect gifts included for me in Christ is to give myself, body, emotions, mind and will, to Him.

II. The religion of a large group of professing Christians is largely in the sphere of their bodies, since they look to God chiefly for His gifts to their outward life, health, and comfort. The fervor of other Christians is rather in the way of emotion and their religion belongs to that lower department of spirit which we call the animal soul, wherein the passions and emotions reside. And there are people who seek in their religious exercises, to confine themselves to the use of their intellect. Do I belong to

any one of these three groups? If I do, then let me consecrate not alone my body, my emotions, or my mind, but my heart and will in one complete act of self-surrender to my risen Saviour.

III. St. James concludes our passage by urging us to "receive the engrafted Word which is able to save [our] souls." We need to enter into the perfect Human Nature of Jesus in order that He may make our whole being fruitful to God. The same thought, applied to Easter, is taught us by St. Paul in Romans vii: 4, where he exhorts us that we "should be married to Him Who is raised from the dead that we should bring forth fruit unto God." As a bride gives *herself*, body, heart and mind, to the love of her husband, so must I wed the risen Christ rendering to Him all that I have and all that I am.



Low Sunday

Peace through the Risen Prince of Peace.

Read St. John xiv: 27-31

I. The apostles were gathered together in the "upper room" with doors and windows fast bolted against the Jews. Probably there was, threatening them from the streets, a mob, aroused to renewed and heightened fury by the report of the guards that Jesus was risen. To the cowering group of His friends "came Jesus and stood in the midst and saith, 'Peace be unto you'" (St. John xx: 19). And when once they were assured that it was Himself they seem to have entirely forgotten the dangers that surrounded them in the absolute confidence they reposed in their Master, proved now to be all-powerful even over death itself. It is thus that we can, through the risen

Prince of Peace, maintain our peace of mind in the midst of the seething temptations, cares, and sins of the world around us.

II. The world confesses its lack of peace and its yearning for this sweet, yet potent, gift from Christ. "How to take command of circumstances instead of being their slave," writes Professor Peabody; "how to own one's wealth and not be owned by it; how to rule one's spirit as well as to take a city; how to labor together with God instead of becoming a cog in some great machine; how to maintain peace of mind amid the distresses, illusions, and tragedies of experience—this is the cry for power which goes up from many a life, ensnared—as whose is not—in the mechanism and materialism of the world."

III. But there is One Who says to me, because I am a Christian, "Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." The world gives the "peace" of a dead conscience, Christ the perfect peace of a mind which is stayed on Him. I must walk a narrow bridge over the chasm which separates me from eternal life, and on each side is the flood of worldliness, but I shall cross safely if I walk "looking away" to the Christ of Easter holding out His Arms to me on the other shore.



Monday after the First Sunday after Easter

My Life in Christ Risen.

Read 1 Thess. i:6-10

The last verse of our assigned passage means that the Thessalonians 'wait for God's Son from Heaven, Whom He raised from the dead, even Jesus, who is drawing us to Himself and in this way is delivering us

from the wrath even now coming upon the disobedient." St. Paul's thought is of our deliverance in our present life from the misery which robs of their peace and joy those who are not in Christ; and it is the risen Lord Who thus saves us from the sorrow of the world by attracting us into union with Himself. Now the two deep sources of the suffering which the disobedient bring upon themselves are the emptiness, and the isolation, of a life which is centered in itself.

II. It is communion with Christ which alone can fill the interior depths of my soul. Of our relation to those about us, even our nearest and best loved friends, Keble says truly,

"Each in his hidden sphere of joy or woe
Our hermit spirits dwell."

But Jesus in His Godhead enters into my heart and claims it as His own. Yet He does not receive from me without bestowing upon me His unique attention. St. Catherine of Genoa said boldly, "It appears to me indeed that God hath no other business than myself."

III. Only in Christ is perfect fellowship possible. Emmanuel Kant, although he had written a famous book about love for one's fellow-men, yet was estranged from his own near relatives, and, when someone spoke to him on his death-bed about his friends, said: "Friends? There are no friends!" Had he but known friendship in the risen Christ! I can meet my friend only in God, because, for one thing, I cannot otherwise fully know the content of his mind, nor what is the context in his life of any word of his. Only God understands him and me, and only in God shall we understand one another. St. Francis de Sales tells us that St. Jerome and St. Augustine agreed upon this

as a true friendship: It is one knit *by* God, *in* God, *for* God.



Tuesday after the First Sunday after Easter

The First Resurrection.

Read St. John v: 21-25

I. St. John, both in his Gospel and in the Revelation, teaches that Christians are now in a true sense already risen from the grave. In his Gospel he records for us the very words of Incarnate God, that we *are* passed from death unto life and *now* have eternal life. In Revelation again he says, "Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection; over these the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years." Thus he brings home to us that we are admitted, even during our spiritual warfare and the labors and sorrows of earth, to share in Christ's heavenly life. We are reigning with Him now, for the "thousand years" is but the life of the Church from Pentecost to the general judgment.

II. Let it be my aspiration, then, to share my Lord's whole life. "I call you not servants but friends," he said, showing that He means me to know what His intimate fellowship is. Let me, then, accept to the full this invitation of my Sovereign. Like earthly kings, Jesus occupies the "solitude of the crown." He has many dependents, but few accept "that free buoyant intercourse of mind with mind, of heart with heart, that entire reciprocity of sympathies," which He offers to all. It seems more possible for us to have real fellowship with one of the saints; the royalty, the ineffable holiness, the awfulness, of Deity seem to set Him apart in a sphere of light unapproachable (1 Tim. vi: 16). Yet He claimed the

fellowship of His three most intimate friends on the Mount of Transfiguration and in Gethsemane, and now that He has entered into our hearts He would fain draw us all into more and more intimate union with Himself. But if I would share Christ's whole life I must have a heart like His.

III. St. John himself wonderfully illustrates this truth. He leaned on the Lord's breast at supper and was told his Master's secret, because he was the Apostle of Love. Indeed our Lord could commit even His mother to St. John, and the beloved disciple took her "to his own." He himself corrected the tradition which had grown up in his honor that Christ had said he should not die; he had too true a sympathy with his Master to be willing to change or add to His words. Am I trying to be a Christian after Christ's own Heart, or am I trying to make a Christ after my own heart?



Wednesday after the First Sunday after Easter

Finding the Cross.

Read St. Mark iv: 30-34

I. The "Invention of the Cross" is the title of a feast which the Church keeps to commemorate St. Helena's discovery of the Holy Rood. Let us learn from it to find the cross, with all its saving power, hidden in each of those worries which often try our patience. And for our inspiration let us take a day in Christ's life and see how He carried His daily cross. There was His trouble with inattentive audiences. "Hearken," He would say, to call their attention. And the Gospel records His little devices to help His hearers concentrate their attention; as when He said to them (St. Mark iv: 30), "Whereunto shall we liken

the Kingdom of God?", as a good teacher will stir up interest by calling on his pupils to help him teach. It was evident He was grieved by the dullness of His people. Even His own apostles could not understand the simplest of His parables, so that He wondered how they would be able to understand those more difficult ones which were to follow (St. Mark iv: 13). Yet He altered His plan of teaching to suit the limitations of His hearers and carefully explained each one of His parables to them, after the occasion on which they were given.

II. Or if we consider the trial to Him of the crowding people we again see something of His daily cross. St. Mark says, graphically, that so many as had plagues "fell upon Him" (St. Mark iii: 10, R.V. marg.), or "threw themselves upon Him." His perfect Human Nature, so refined and sensitive, must have suffered keenly at contact with these diseased and unclean peasants. Yet, when He had provided that "a small boat should wait upon Him," to insure His having a refuge in case of absolute need, He stood there patiently hour after hour healing all who came to Him.

III. Towards the end of such a day as this He told His parable of the Kingdom of Heaven which springs up from a beginning as small as the tiniest seed, but grows taller than all herbs (St. Mark iv: 30). Now the Fathers point out that this little seed is very sour and is even sharper when crushed, so that it well symbolizes one of our daily griefs. And as from the bruised seed a tree grows which will shelter the fowls of the air, so the Cross will be found in our small troubles, and may be uplifted to make a shelter for weaker souls which shall take refuge beneath its shadow.



Thursday after the First Sunday after Easter

Peace with Ourselves.

Read Prov. xx: 26-30.

I. It is impossible to be at peace with ourselves unless we are habitually honest with our conscience. For conscience is the faculty by which "the spirit of man [becomes] the candle of the Lord, searching all the inward parts of [his breast]" (Prov. xx: 27). We cannot hide our faults and sins from it, and unless we would deny ourselves and create schism in our own nature, we must admit the justice of the verdicts of conscience and hearken to its voice. On the other hand, little acts of obedience to the "still small voice" within us, by accumulating, make us strong to resist temptation; just as God uses the combined weight of tiny grains of sand to restrain the onset of the ocean.

II. My will is the mistress of my nature and of my fate, and of the fate of an uncounted number besides myself. If my will rejects the divine control, it will become a source of danger to all. Like the slack end of the great belt which controls some vast machine when it slips from its pulley and flies loose, it works destruction to everything within its reach. But if my will is good it will be, like the will of God, all love, and full of helpfulness to myself and to every soul within its circle of influence.

III. As little obediences make for me a good conscience, so, by repetition, they mould my will into the likeness of God's. My conduct, also, perhaps insensibly, is formed by habitual acts of my good will, so that, by repeatedly exercising a virtue, it presently comes to be a second nature to me and operates unconsciously. The eye of a microscopist which is not used for looking into the instrument, sees nothing, having been trained into a habit of convenient blind-

ness. So my will also forms habits of choosing good and rejecting evil spontaneously, relieved now from the painful effort with which its self-discipline began. And this is the one road to true peace with myself.



Friday after the First Sunday after Easter

Peace with Our Neighbor through the Risen Christ (1).

Read Phil. iv: 1-5

I. Among the Christians at Philippi were many different temperaments and classes. There was Lydia, the wealthy woman merchant from Thyatira, engaged in selling a lucrative kind of goods called "purple" in the Acts, and a Jewish proselyte. Side by side with her in the congregation was a slave girl, a Greek native who had been a "Pythoness," that is, one possessed of a spirit of "divination" supposed to come from Apollo. There in the church also were prominent and, as we may suppose, wealthy women, who had 'labored with' St. Paul, or, literally, had "been athletes with" him in the Gospel, but unfortunately had fallen out with each other, perhaps over church matters. Now the principal purpose of the Epistle to the Philippians is to bring unity out of these heterogeneous elements. His method is to fill their minds full of the Mind of Christ, (ii: 1-9); to teach them to rejoice in the Lord always, and to think of Him as ever at hand (iv: 4-5).

II. One way in which we are always to seek to discern the presence of Christ among us is pointed out in the eighth verse. St. Paul says, as we may paraphrase the literal translation of his words, 'Whatsoever things are true, honorable, just, stainless, lovely, winning, if there be any, even natural, virtue,

and if there be anything which even human society praises as good, meditate on these things for your future practice.' Each one of these good qualities makes the soul of our fellow-man like the soul of Jesus, and ought to be so precious to us that we will seek it at any cost.

III. By loving beautiful things in others, rather than vaingloriously rejoicing over their faults, we can bring out of the hearts about us a magnanimous, noble love like our own. So the wise man urges (Prov. xxvii: 19), saying: "As in water, face answereth to face, so the heart of man to man." The ancient Catholic comment on this verse, "Si vis amari, ama," teaches me that 'if I would be loved, I must love.'



Saturday after the First Sunday after Easter Peace with Our Neighbor through the Risen Christ (11).

Read Eph. ii: 11-17

I. To keep peace with all men is one of the most difficult of the precepts of God. St. James confesses that the tongue is an unruly member and, in his stern phrase, "is set on fire of Hell." "If any man stumbleth not in word the same is a perfect man," he says again (iii: 2, A. V. marg.). We need the powerful restraint and encouragement of Christ's Presence to keep us always at peace with our neighbors. He purchased peace at the price of His own life; as we read, "He made peace by His Cross." Even the strong prejudice, or perhaps animosity, of the Jewish Christians towards the Gentiles was broken down by His sweet influence. "For He is our peace," St. Paul wrote to the Ephesians, "Who hath made both," that is, Jews and Gentiles, "one and hath broken

down the middle wall of partition." Surely, then, He is able to draw me into love like His own for those who are the very opposite to me in disposition, convictions, and all things.

II. As once He set a child in the midst of His apostles that they might learn humility and love from the little one, so now He is in the midst of the Church, saying to us: "Learn of Me, for I am meek and lowly in heart." When He was accused of blasphemy, the crime most repulsive to the perfect reverence of His human Heart, He was silent. Malchus came against Him with a sword as if He had been a thief, and His only reprisal lay in healing the man's wounded ear. Let me learn from the dear Son of Man to meet false witness and unmerited injuries with His own meek and lowly Heart.

III. Since Christ is in the midst of us, we cannot attack one another without trampling Him under our feet. He shall be to me a Bond drawing me to my neighbors. Like His apostles, I shall hold my peace from quarreling in His Presence. And when I am stirred to unkind or resentful thoughts I must learn to see His gentle, grieving Face between me and the one against whom Satan would rouse my anger.



Second Sunday after Easter

Hope Through the Good Shepherd. Read 1 St. Peter i: 1-5

I. I am a member of the flock which is the Good Shepherd's own, as He assures me in the Gospel to-day. From this truth, that my soul is in His mighty Hand, springs my hope of eternal life (St. John x: 28), which is one of my Easter blessings. 'The God and Father of our Lord,' says St. Peter, 'hath be-

gotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.' And this hope which we are given through the blessed message of Easter saves our souls (Rom. viii: 24). It is also the assurance to us that our dear ones who are asleep shall rise again. "For," as St. Paul taught the Thessalonians, "if we believe [as, of course, we do] that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also that are fallen asleep will God through Jesus bring with Him [at His coming]" (1 Thess. iv: 14, R.V. marg.).

II. The Christian hope is described by St. Paul as "an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast and which entereth within the veil" (Heb. vi: 19). Our anchor of hope is lodged in the depths of divine mercy as the ship's anchor is plunged into the ocean, but hope is an anchor thrown upward, not down, and which surely and steadfastly moors our soul in the harbor of Heaven.

III. Through that prophet who best understood His love for souls, God revealed our sure Easter hope long before it was actually given, so eager was He to cheer men with the promise of this His crowning act of mercy. "I will ransom them from the power of the grave," He cried out in His tenderness for His dying people; "I will redeem them from death. O death I will be thy plagues! O grave I will be thy destruction!" Then, to seal this glorious promise with the assurance that He would never repent of it, He added, "Repentance shall be hid from Mine Eyes." My Christian hope, therefore, is based upon the truth of God, and I know that if I let Him He will redeem me from the hand of death.



Monday after the Second Sunday after Easter**The Power of Faith in Our Lord's Resurrection.**

Read St. Mark xvi: 1-8

I. In many ways God teaches us the truth of the Easter message, so eager is He that we should believe. Nature speaks for Him through the analogies she provides, for example, through the development of the plant out of the seed we sow. Every stalk of wheat shakes its head at him who denies the Resurrection. And God sent His holy angels to roll away the stone from the mouth of the sepulchre, not in order to release Christ, for He had already passed through it, but to let the women look within and learn that their Lord had risen.

II. There is a fable which well represents to us the folly of the attempts made by unbelievers to disprove our Lord's physical Resurrection. It is related that the owl was blinded by the radiance of the sun and determined to quench the offensive splendor. Therefore, he hooted at the shining orb all the day until at length it did indeed sink from view behind the western hills, leaving the owl triumphant in the darkness. But "very early" on the morrow the day-spring leapt once more into the eastern heavens with all his power of putting to flight the creatures of night. It is thus that the Sun of Righteousness has from every attack risen with renewed resplendence. The first attempt to rob us of our faith in the Easter Gospel is typical of all that have come after. For the soldiers attempted to bear witness of what passed in their sleep, saying for the sake of a bribe, "His disciples came by night and stole Him away while we slept." They represented fairly the subsequent rationalistic theories to explain away the best-proved fact in history.

III. Two passages in Holy Scripture taken together indicate the power of faith in the Christ of Easter. 'This is the victory which overcometh the world, even our faith. Who is he that overcometh the world but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God! Jesus was declared to be the Son of God, with power, by the resurrection.' It is, therefore, faith in the Easter Gospel which will enable me to overcome the world. Those who have rejected it, like Zola, think humanity is a trainload of people rushing towards an unknown goal, with a dead engineer in the cab. But we know that, while we are swiftly traveling through life and death to God, the Engineer of our life of faith is the risen Christ.



Tuesday after the Second Sunday after Easter
Easter Teaching about Holy Communion.

Read St. Luke xxiv : 28-35

I. The revelation to us through the Resurrection of our Lord would have been incomplete unless it had included teaching about the Blessed Sacrament, which is the centre of a Christian's spiritual life. St. John gives us the example of a great act of faith in the Holy Mysteries, when, seeing the cerements lying where the Lord's Body had left them when He rose, he believed in the unseen Presence of his Saviour. So we, following in the footsteps of the Apostle of Love, seeing only a wafer, believe in the Real Presence of the invisible Christ. But our Lord has Himself shown us how He can be, in His Humanity, present and yet invisible. His various appearances to His disciples during the Great Forty Days must have trained them to feel that, even when they saw Him not, He might still be at their side.

II. Jesus reproached the two disciples whom He joined on the road to Emmaus, because they were so "slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken." How much more will He reproach me if I am slow to believe His own words, as where he says of the Blessed Sacrament: "This is my Body!" And as if to apply His reproach to those who believe not in the Sacrament of His Love, Christ made Himself known to Cleopas and his companion 'in the breaking of the Bread.' (xxv: 35)

III. But if my faith in Holy Communion is definite and strong, it will stir my energy to practice an early, fasting, and penitent reception of this Holy Sacrament. And my Lord has set the seal of His approval upon those who seek His altar with these physical and spiritual dispositions, for He came forth from His sepulchre first of all to the women who had sought His Body "very early" Easter morning, and to the penitent Magdalen and Peter. Let my risen Lord teach me how best to prepare my body and soul to receive His glorified life.



Wednesday after the Second Sunday after Easter

The Good Shepherd Desiring to Give Us His Risen Life.

Read 2 Cor. iv: 11-15

I. After celebrating the first Eucharist on the night before He suffered our Lord declared to His apostles that He would not again drink of that Fruit of the vine until He should drink it *new* with His Church in the Kingdom. This saying was interpreted and fulfilled, as it seems, by our Lord celebrating for the second time during the days following His Resurrection. Acts i: 4, literally translated, probably means

that Christ was "eating together with them"; and St Peter afterwards said to the Jews that the apostles had "eaten and drunk" with Christ after He rose from the dead. The Holy Feast, it seems, was so essential to the spiritual life of His disciples that our Lord could not let them wait until after the descent of the Holy Ghost to give them priestly powers, but Himself fed them perhaps many times during the Great Forty Days, with His own Hand.

II. The means whereby He feeds the immortal life of my soul and body is the communication to me of His risen Humanity, full of grace and power. This is St. Paul's thought when he says that "He which raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise up us also by Jesus," that is by His Easter life nourishing our incipient resurrection life.

III. The Good Shepherd has for His sheep a Food which is indeed fitted to feed their famishing souls. It is the "Plant of renown," which long before, through His prophet, He had promised to "raise up for" His flock that they might be "no more consumed with hunger" (Ezek xxxiv: 29). Unspeakably marvelous as is this provision of the divine economy, still it is true that I am to feed upon Jesus raised up from the grave, to satisfy my starving soul while yet I ever hunger and thirst afresh after "the Lord, my Righteousness."



Thursday after the Second Sunday after Easter Receiving the Gift of Christ's Risen Life. Read 1 Cor. xv: 45-49

I. In the Gospel for this week the Good Shepherd said that He would lay down His life for His sheep. And He did this upon the altar of the Cross that His flock might receive and appropriate His life thus freely

given up for them. Now St. Paul explains to me that His risen Body is the Medicine my fallen humanity must receive in order to serve God acceptably. 'The God of Peace,' his words literally mean, 'that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus Christ, that great Shepherd of the sheep, in,' that is 'with,' "the Blood of the everlasting covenant, bring you to full health and strength to do His will in every good work, working in you that which is well pleasing in His sight through Jesus Christ." Each of us needs this setting right of our disordered nature, and it is Christ Who makes us whole.

II. After God had destroyed Solomon's temple because the Jews had profaned His altar, Ezekiel in the last chapters of His prophecy sketched the plan of a new temple which would surround the Lord's sanctuary with square beyond square of protecting areas. In the heart of this ideal temple he would have the penitent people erect an altar called the "Mount of God," the topmost slab of which he named the "Lion of God." The teaching of this beautiful type is that at communion we ascend like Moses into the mount, come face to Face there with Jehovah, and then receive out of the Body of the Lion of God the honey of abundant grace.

III. The second Adam, St. Paul teaches, "was made a quickening" or "life-giving," "Spirit." (1 Cor. xv: 45, A.V. marg.) By this St. Paul means that the risen Humanity of our Lord has entered into a spiritual state of being in order that, hidden under the veils of bread and wine, He may be communicated to us to fill us with the perfection of glorious life.



Friday after the Second Sunday after Easter**Practicing the Presence of the Risen Lord. Read Prov. xxii: 8-12**

I. Let us walk onward with our Risen Saviour! Let us receive Him as 'the Breath of our nostrils, the Anointed of the Lord, under Whose shadow we shall live among the heathen' (Lam. iv: 20). Let it be our care that we welcome our unseen Companion with a holy, as well as a loving, heart, that we may fulfil that precept of Solomon: 'He that loveth with pureness of heart, grace is on his lips, and the King is his Friend.'

II. It will require long practice of Christ's Presence to make realization of my union with Him habitual. I may adapt for my instruction in this holy exercise a saying of Solomon: 'Train up [thy soul] in the way it should go, and when it is old it will not depart from it.' For the Hebrew word for "train" has a very suggestive history. Its original meaning was, "to force into the mouth," or "mind," from a root "to choke"; it then came to express the idea "to imbue" or "fill" the heart and soul; finally it developed the significance, "to consecrate, as a temple or altar." At first, therefore, we have to compel ourselves to remember that Christ is ever with us, and force from our hearts an act of love for Him. But this practice becomes easier and sweeter the longer we continue it, until His Presence fills our hearts, and consecrates us wholly to Him.

III. A simple mediæval allegory teaches us to cultivate Christ's Presence by filling our life with reminders of Him. It represents the Christian's spirit as a castle, called Mansoul, with gates named after the senses. The King, to Whom this castle belonged, finding that the garrison, that is our will, was accustomed to fall asleep while on guard, and so failed to

admit Him and rather left the way open to His enemies, set before the Eye-gate the Holy Sign (of His Cross), before the Ear-gate the Holy Name (of Jesus), and before the Mouth-gate the Holy Food (of His Body). This He did to remind the garrison of Mansoul of Himself, and keep it on the watch for His coming. Do the practices of my religion remind me of Christ? When I sign myself do I *think* of the Cross? When I say or hear the sacred Name do I let it recall my Saviour to me? Do I often think of my communion, and practice spiritual reception of my Lord at times when I cannot receive Him sacramentally?



Saturday after the Second Sunday after Easter

The Resurrection Sealing the Truth of Christ's Words.

Read St. Luke xxiv: 1-8

I. Easter Day brought the fulfilment of our Lord's stupendous assertions and promises. It proved His every saying to be true, and therefore as I feed on His words, in meditation and the reading of the Scriptures and spiritual writers, I am appropriating what I know is divine truth. And the word of God is powerful to work a great conversion in me each time I receive it, for it was mighty enough to create the world and bring light out of darkness. Also my God expects it to be effective in my soul, for He says: "My word shall not return to Me empty." Now the first thing I must do towards appropriating this creative, illuminating word is to *keep* it. Christ's richest promises are made to those who keep His word, as where He says (St. John xiv: 23): "Verily, verily, I say unto you if any man *keep* My sayings he shall never taste of death." Let me then reflect upon the sermon, or

my spiritual reading, and not waste the divine words committed to me.

II. A second principle to be observed, if I would appropriate Christ's word, is that I must take home to myself the warnings and rebukes, as well as the promises, of the Scriptures. It is related that the author of the "Castle of Indolence," although he has taught us so beautifully in his poem the fate of the slothful, was himself one of the most indolent of men. But I must apply to my own soul the exhortations of the divine word, regarding the sermon or reading as addressed directly to myself.

III. Last of all, I must put into practice the instructions I derive from the divine word. I will no longer 'limp between two opinions.' The Lord is God; I will follow Him (1 Kings xviii: 21), not by steps of body but by acts of obedience and affections of heart. For I know that if I follow Christ I 'shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life,' and that 'where He is now in Heaven I shall be' at last. (St. John xi: 9; xii: 26.)



The Third Sunday after Easter

The Joy of Life from the Risen Christ.

Read the Gospel for the Day.

I. Nature, at this holy season, puts forth her greenness and beauty, as it were to show her joy in the risen Christ. "The mountains and the hills break forth before Him into song and all the trees of the field clap their hands." For us, His intelligent friends, "the light of the King's Countenance is life"; 'He fills us with joy with His Countenance' (Prov. xvi: 15; Acts ii: 28).

II. In the light of the Easter message poverty and trouble which loom above us are like twin cr. gs transfigured by the rising sun. Truly, it is as He says in the Revelation, "I know thy poverty, but thou art rich," because we have the infinite wealth of Heaven brought to us from God's treasure-house in our risen Lord. And we have His promise that He will be with us in trouble, in some especially loving way. To Magdalén, grieving at the empty tomb, He disclosed Himself by His tender "Mary." He came to the broken-hearted Peter grieving apart from the other apostles, and to the sorrowing disciples on the road to Emmaus. In the Gospel to-day He teaches us that suffering presages greater happiness than we have ever known before, just as the pangs of child-birth preface the mother's joy in her new-born babe.

III. Our Lord trained His friends to rejoice in Him even when they did not perceive His Presence. I must remember this in any time of spiritual aridity or coldness, for my union with Him is just as real even though I have no sensible consolation from it. A certain man who loved birds used to build boxes for them, and often stood looking up at them with enjoyment as from full throats they poured forth their songs. Yet he was totally deaf, not one note could he hear. I must be able in this same way to rejoice in Christ, even when my inward ear is no longer ravished by the sweetness of His Voice.



Monday after the Third Sunday after Easter
Concentrating Our Spiritual Vision upon Jesus Risen.

Read St. John xxi: 1-14

I. Christ is the lode-star of my life. The clear heavens display millions of twinkling lights, and among them the far-distant stationary polar star

seems insignificant. But the radiant constellations of planets disappear from the sky at intervals, the polar star is always there. It guides millions of travelers on land and sea. It leads many a wanderer to his home. So it is in our spiritual course. Jesus Christ is "the same yesterday, to-day and forever" (Heb. xiii: 8). He only can guide me to my eternal home.

II. Our Lord is interested even in the little matters of my daily life. How full of thoughtfulness and kindness was His provision of a morning meal for the tired fisherman on the lake, the five apostles who had been fishing through the night! With His own Hands He had made the fire and broiled the fish; and with what solicitude He bade them dine before He would go on to execute the all-important purpose of His appearance! I can be sure, therefore, that He makes the details of my work His own concern, so that its very atmosphere is sweetened by His Presence, and monotonous routine becomes full of delightful events, because of His interest and sympathy.

III. Furthermore, the life which is focused on Jesus risen is placed beyond the possibility of failure. It must end in the most absolute success because it is sure of gaining its Divine Object. The novices of a certain religious community, on the eve of profession, are left alone all night, locked into the chapel, with only our Lord for their companion. They face the fact that for the remainder of their lives they must accept Him as their All. Not one of them has ever failed to take his vows of profession joyfully after such a night. And surely they are wise, for theirs is the highest wage. I also, as they, if only I direct the intention of my life to Him, shall have Incarnate God for my "exceeding great Reward."



Tuesday after the Third Sunday after Easter**Easter and Penitence.**

Read St. John xxi: 15-19

I. The Christian goes on his way in life "sorrowful yet alway rejoicing." Penitence, therefore, is a suitable subject for meditation in Eastertide, since it is out of such sorrow that joy arises. For penitence has as its very heart the truest and most sincere love of Jesus. By our sin we have slain the Lamb of God. As St. Paul says in Frederic Myers's wonderful poem:

Standing afar I summon you anigh Him,
Yes, to the multitudes I call and say,
"This is my King! I preach and I deny Him,
Christ! Whom I crucify anew to-day."

Penitence is inevitable for me, if I have true loyalty to Christ. And my Lord made Easter morning a special occasion of teaching us His love for penitent sinners. His first thought after His Resurrection was for penitents, the Blessed Magdalen, and St. Peter weeping alone.

II. There is a great joy in penitence, the joy of asking the pardon of a wronged Friend. How we long to beg forgiveness of one against whom we sinned and who has died before we could express our sorrow and seek his pardon. But one great source of our Easter happiness is that Jesus lives, and that we may show Him our deep repentance by our love for Him.

III. My most perfect act of contrition is an act of love for Christ, made in response to His love for me. How wonderful it is that I have but to love Him, not only for His gifts but for Himself, and I shall salve and heal all the wounds I have dealt Him by my sins. The only reparation He sought from St. Peter, who

had denied Him thrice, was an act of perfect contrition for each unfaithfulness, the "I love Thee" repeated three times over to make up for His threefold denial and to satisfy his Master's wounded Heart.



Wednesday after the Third Sunday after Easter

The Glory of Penitence.

Read 1 Sam. xviii : 1-4

I. Penitence helps us to be like the risen Christ. St. Paul presents to us the ideal of our life, when he declares that we should "become the righteousness of God"; but at the same time he tells us that the way we can approach always nearer to this goal of perfection is by abiding "in Christ," in the sphere of His holiness, and by receiving His grace. But it is penitence which makes us receptive of Him. "Repent ye," He said, "for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand." All the grace and holiness of God's Kingdom are ready to enter our lives when penitence has made a way.

II. Penitence does greater honor to the Crucified. Jonathan affords us a type of the humility which gives all glory possible to our Saviour, even though our praise of Him involves the confession of our own weakness and failure. After David had slain Goliath and put the Philistines to flight, Jonathan "loved him as his own soul" for that great deliverance, and therefore he stripped himself of his royal robe and his garments, with his sword, bow, and girdle, as if resigning to him all claims to princely majesty and victorious might. So we in penitence strip ourselves of pride, and freely acknowledge that to Christ's mercy, love, and power alone we owe our salvation from our enemies.

III. In penitence we shall find four of the Beatitudes: (a) "Blessed are they that mourn" for their sins, "for they shall be comforted." (b) "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven." (c) In contrition is essentially involved the resolve to be holier and more Christlike, so that we can claim still another of Jesus' blessings: "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled." (d) Tears of godly sorrow wash our spiritual eyes to behold the King in His beauty, so that we come to be among the "pure in heart" who are indeed blessed, "for they shall see God."



Thursday after the Third Sunday after Easter

Our Own Resurrection.

Read St. John xi: 23-27

I. St. Paul speaks of Jesus risen as the First Fruits of them that are asleep. In this he refers to the religious custom among God's ancient people of bringing a sheaf of the first-ripe grain and offering it to God on the altar. Thereupon the worshipers were assured of His blessing upon the remainder of the harvest, that it also would be gathered in. In this same way, the Resurrection of our Lord was God's gracious proclamation that in Christ He has accepted the harvest of His elect; Easter, therefore, brings to us the pledge that we shall all be gathered soul and body into the heavenly garner. Let us then shape our lives with the purpose of being wheat for God's storehouse, like the sheaf of Christ's glorious risen Humanity.

II. Our life is hid with Christ. As the buds of the foliage in winter are wrapped around with fold upon fold of warm coverings, so during the winter of

our present life we are sheltered in Christ; and as in the spring the bud emerges into view with fresh life and beauty, so when Christ, the Sun of Righteousness, shall appear, then shall we also appear with Him in glory. "I am the Resurrection and the Life," He said; and, again, "Because I live, ye shall live also."

III. Our Lord was "free among the dead" (Ps. lxxxviii: 5), a freedom He shares with those who sleep in Him. St. Paul draws a distinction between the totality of the departed and those of them who are numbered among the faithful. For this purpose he uses two different expressions: when his reference is to all the departed he speaks of the "resurrection of the dead," but when his thought is confined to the faithful, the "resurrection *from* the dead" (Phil. iii: 11, R.V.). In a real sense, therefore, we who are full of Christ's resurrection life "shall never see death," for when we have died in Him we shall still be "free among the [unholy] dead" and only awaiting our resurrection from death, when our Lord shall be manifested and we shall appear with Him in glory.



Friday after the Third Sunday after Easter.

Our Resurrection Body Prepared by Christ in Heaven.

Read 2 Cor. iv: 17-5:4

I. The Divine Carpenter of Nazareth is building for us a house in Heaven, with which, to use St. Paul's double metaphor, we are to be "clothed" at our resurrection. The Apostle's thought is drawn from the magnificent Corinthian public buildings which he used to see from his window when he looked up from sewing the canvas of the tent on which he wrought. Great as was the contrast between those

magnificent structures, famous throughout the Empire, and the tent he was making, it was no greater to his mind than the difference in glory between the splendid "edifice" (of our resurrection body) "not made with hands, eternal in the heavens" and 'our earthly house of this tent' which is to be "dissolved" (2 Cor. v: 1).

II. Our faithful Lord is, therefore, in Heaven, preparing to 'change the body of our humiliation, that it may be fashioned like unto the Body of His glory, according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself' (Phil. iii: 21, A.V. marg.). This is ultimately the one sufficient solution of the problem of physical evil, which the devil brought into God's good world. These sickly bodies, which no sooner reach their prime than they begin to grow old, even if misfortune does not lop off some of their limbs, are to be changed, not annihilated and superseded, and are to be made like the risen Body of Christ. Kingsley thus grew exultant over this truth:

Ah, new limbs are ready kept for us in the treasury of God ;
They shall not spoil the love they try to speak ;
They shall not fail our souls as these have done.

Our present light affliction shall but "work out for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory."

III. Our part in the preparation of this glorious immortal body appears from the fact that it will be substantially identical with the body we have in this life. Our Lord could say to those who He well knew would all be martyred, "Not a hair of your head shall perish." The state of my resurrection body, therefore, depends upon the discipline by which I control, and the grace by which I nourish, the flesh which now with my soul constitutes me a

human person. I must give these hands to the service of God if I would be able to say with a holy martyr who suffered his to be cut off. "These I had from Heaven, and from [God] I hope to receive them again" (2 Macc. vii: 11).

Saturday after the Third Sunday after Easter
Christ Conforming Us to Himself. Read Acts ii: 42-47

I. Through the risen Christ, the infant Church became of "one heart and of one soul." Through His influence and grace His disciples all gained spiritual natures moulded after His. Therefore, elsewhere in the Acts, St. Luke speaks of their "singleness" of heart. Let me then beseech my Lord Jesus to make my heart like His Sacred Heart through the power of His risen life.

II. The fate of our body depends on the preparation of our spirit during this life. A rough analogy is afforded by the works of a watch. You may remove the works from their case and they will continue ticking away, while the empty case remains quite idle and useless. Then again you can return the works, and the watch which a little before was divided into parts, each of which was incomplete without the other, is now once more a unity. Somewhat in the same way the soul departing from the body at death continues its life of emotion, thought, and volition, although the completeness of our person will be restored only when at the resurrection our spiritual part has returned and claimed its glorified material complement. Thus the dominant factor which will determine my eternal fate is my soul, and my daily care must be that it should become more and more like the human Soul the return of which to

the dead Body of the Crucified vivified It and made It glorious.

III. But what shall expand and beautify my soul, except divine love, and what shall feed the flame of love in it but "grace for grace" derived from the "fullness" of the risen Jesus? (St. John i: 16). Bunyan represents this under the figure of a fire which Christian found mysteriously kindled and brightly burning in a fireplace which opened, it seems, into two rooms. Now there stood before the fire one who constantly poured water upon it, yet, marvelous to behold, the flame burned ever brighter. But when Christian went into the other room he perceived a man there secretly pouring oil on the fire, which kindled the blaze as the one on the other side sought to extinguish it. For the eternal glory of my soul and body alike I need this invisible Saviour to kindle my flickering spark of love with the precious oil of His grace.



Fourth Sunday after Easter

Devotion to Catholic Truth. Read the Gospel for the Day.

I. "Nevertheless," our Lord said to His Church, "I tell you the truth." When, a few hours after, He stood before Pilate's judgment seat, He declared, "For this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth." Think of Him journeying from village to village to preach the Gospel, often completely worn out, as when He sat upon the curb of the well at Samaria (St. John iv: 6), or lay fast asleep on the boat's cushion in the midst of the storm. When at length He consummated, on the Cross, His life of trial and suffering for the truth's sake, He said that this final labor of His Passion was that we

'might be sanctified *in truth*' (St. John xvii: 19), that is, in the sphere of truth, the Catholic Church. He was persecuted and plotted against because He had told men the truth. We may follow Him through every fresh humiliation and suffering of His Passion and say each time: The Truth was (in Him) crowned with thorns; the Truth was scourged with the fearful leaden-thonged whip; Pilate exposed the Truth to the scoffing multitude of Its enemies, saying, as it were, "Behold the Truth." For Jesus declared, "I am . . . the Truth."

II. Our Lord was so eager to be going Home that even the Cross was sweet and He endured it, despising the shame, for the joy that was set before Him of receiving in His Manhood the glory which His Godhead had possessed before the world was. Yet He tarried on earth forty days. What could induce Him to postpone His happiness so long? It was His desire to teach the truths of the Kingdom of Heaven to His Church (Acts i: 3). How great, then, ought to be my devotion and my fidelity to the Church's teaching of His truth.

III. My Lord revealed to me that He is "the Way, the Truth and the Life." In this golden chain by which Jesus binds my soul to God, "Truth" is the middle link between "Way" and "Life." Therefore, if I have not the Truth, how shall I know the Way or attain to the Life?



Monday after the Fourth Sunday after Easter
Means to Increase Our Faith.

Read Eph. iv: 11-15

I. The cross is the symbol of devotion to truth, while the weather-vane represents to us man's restless curiosity to hear some new thing to which he is

attracted by its pleasing novelty. We belong to the Catholic Church, made infallible by that Holy Spirit Who proceeds from the Mind of the ascended Christ to lead her into all the truth. Therefore we ought not to be like weather-cocks "carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive."

II. But I must not be satisfied with remaining *stationary*, necessary as *steadfastness* is in my faith, but I must go forward into the "unity of the Faith," appropriating every holy teaching of the Bible and the Church. The Catholic Faith is a perfect unity, like some magnificent mosaic, in which every doctrine is a piece, but in which the full beauty and truth of the artist's conception are only revealed by the unbroken whole. Is there some mystery, like the Blessed Sacrament of the Lord's Body, as to which my faith is still dim? How then shall I "come into the unity of the Faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God"? The Scripture teaches me to use two supplementary means. I must remove every moral obstacle, "casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ" (2 Cor. x:5). Along with this way of making myself receptive I must also pray that I may be filled. Let me often say "Lord, I believe, help Thou mine unbelief," and 'Lord increase my faith.'

III. St. Paul gives us also a method whereby we may 'grow up in all things into the Head of the Church, even Christ.' This we shall do by "speaking the truth in love." For if I desire that my religion be deepened so that it becomes true and strong like Christ's own devotion to His Father's teaching (St. John viii: 28), I must speak the truth, even among

those who deny it or who follow practices different from those which it enjoins upon me. In this He set me an example by "witnessing a good confession" before Pontius Pilate. Yet, on the other hand, let us speak in love, not in the spirit of controversy or self-assertion. In bearing our witness let us ever be growing up into the purpose with which our Head preached the Faith, which was to edify and save souls.



Tuesday after the Fourth Sunday after Easter

Faith in the Unseen World.

Read Psalm cxlii.

I. This psalm is a remarkable Old Testament revelation of the three parts into which the Church of God is divided. For when the sacred writer exhorts "Israel [to] rejoice in Him that made him," and the "children of Zion [to] be joyful in their King," he refers, of course, to God's people in this present world. But when presently he says, 'Let the saints triumph in glory,' he is referring to the Church Triumphant in the glory of Heaven. And after this he speaks of those who are "in their beds," or "graves," and piously wishes that they may "sing."

II. In these last words of the Psalmist, therefore, he addresses himself to the faithful departed in Purgatory. I also, like him, should remember the holy dead in the Church Expectant. They are not asleep, but are more vividly awake now than ever they were during their life in this world. For the soul is oppressed, and made dull and drowsy by the flesh in its present weakened state. It is the body, not the spirit, which grows tired and sleepy, and when this body dies the mind and will of man become more keenly alive, especially to those spiritual blessings of

God which now they so imperfectly appreciate. "For," it is written in the Book of Wisdom of Solomon, "the corruptible body presseth down the soul, and the earthly tabernacle weigheth down the mind, [so] that [it] museth upon many [temporal] things" (ix: 15).

III. Our Lord, in the parable of the rich man and the beggar (St. Luke xvi: 19-31), draws aside the veil and shows us the spirit world. He refers to the Intermediate State by the term to which the Jews were accustomed, that is, Abraham's Bosom. And there in that place of light and refreshment, is the soul of him who on earth was only a beggar. From his death-bed, perhaps on the bare earth at the rich man's gate, the angels received his holy soul and bore it to its place of preparation for Heaven. Even in Abraham's Bosom, the spirit, which through all its suffering had looked up to God in faith and love, although it was not yet made perfect, yet was now "comforted" and received its "good things," its blessings of peace and joy. Let me resolve, therefore, that for myself, for those I love, and for all I seek to help, my most earnest wish shall be that we may make a good death and be borne by holy angels to that place of preparation for the Presence of God. And let me express my wish in fervent prayer to God.



Wednesday after the Fourth Sunday after Easter
The Intermediate State. Read St. Luke xiii: 20-24

I. Until our souls reach the eternal day of Heaven, the order of their life must be, first *evening* and then afterwards *morning*. So it was at creation, when the refrain of the sacred writer on the first day was: "And

the evening and the morning were the first day." And this is repeated at the completion of God's work on each succeeding day. The order is always, "the evening and the morning." When, however, we come to the seventh day of the rest that remaineth unto the people of God there is no mention of evening, for then there will be endless day. The holy dead, therefore, must first pass through evening, the twilight of joy mingled with suffering, ere there can be the eternal day of perfect happiness in the Presence of their Lord.

II. The suffering of the holy dead is due to the vision which they have had immediately after death, (Heb. ix: 27), of the infinite love which their every sin has so deeply wounded. "They shall look upon Him Whom they have pierced," said our Saviour, through the prophet Zechariah, of His elect people, "and they shall mourn for Him as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for Him as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn" (Zech. xii: 10). Thus my Lord shows me that the penitence of the holy souls in the Church Expectant is like grief for the loss of an only child, because they feel that their sins have pierced the One Who loves them and Whom they love with an incomparable, unique devotion. Yet this pain is purifying and therefore full of hope; the vision of the wounded Heart of Jesus has brought to them "the spirit of grace and of supplications." Every act of contrition and every prayer for forgiveness brings the purifying grace of their Saviour into their souls in ever greater measure of mercy.

III. Our Lord spoke of the Kingdom of Heaven as being like leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal until the whole was leavened. We may well apply this parable to our present

purpose. For the leaven is grace from Jesus; the woman who takes it and hides it in meal is our holy mother Church; and the three measures represent the three divisions of the Kingdom of God, on earth, in Purgatory, and in Heaven. The supreme need of our holy dead is for *more* of this blessed leaven, the grace of Christ. By receiving this they are, like Lazarus, "comforted"; they are made to "sing" as the Psalmist desired, and they progress toward the morning of glorious, endless day.



Thursday after the Fourth Sunday after Easter

Prayers for the Holy Dead.

Read 2 Tim. i: 13-18

I. Our Lord Himself must have been accustomed to join in the prayers for the departed of Israel, which were part of the Jewish service. When St. Joseph died Jesus would say for him, only in a unique sense, the prayer which every Jewish boy said for his departed parent: "I am ready to serve as atonement for his couch; I am ready to suffer for his transgressions, if only his rest may be peace." Thus Christ sets me the example of praying for the faithful departed.

II. Let me often call before my mind the hope of the holy souls. Two things they long for with desire far greater than hunger and thirst, or the desire for relief of one consumed in physical fire. One of these is self-purification the hope of which is expressed, mystically, by holy Job (xxiii: 10): "When He hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold." The other object of their yearning is the full light of God's Presence and the perfect revelation of His holy Nature. of this the prophet speaks when he says, "He will bring me forth to the light and I shall behold His righteousness" (Micah vii: 9).

III. Now God has revealed His will that we should pray one for another. He "helps the world meditately, that is to say He uses some one to help somebody else." And one principal way in which I can help another soul, which like myself has not yet attained to the fullness of life and joy, is by intercession. Thus St. Paul, in gratitude to Onesimus for his often refreshing the Apostle during his captivity, prays for the soul of his friend, now as it seems passed beyond the veil, saying: "the Lord grant unto him that he may find mercy of the Lord in that day." And although I am but a poor ordinary Christian, yet I, like God's great saint and apostle, may obtain His mercy for any soul in the Church Expectant, for whom I make my prayer. Then how blessed is my opportunity! For by an Our Father I may help a soul in its progress towards Heaven and flood it with unspeakable joy.



Friday after the Fourth Sunday after Easter

The Qualities of Our Risen Body. Read 1 Cor. xv: 40-45

I. The perfect revelation of what our resurrection body will be like was given us by our Lord, when during these Forty Days He displayed the properties of His own risen Human Nature. We know from the proofs He gave, when He ate of the honey-comb and permitted the apostles to feel Him and even to thrust a hand into His Wounds, that His Body was *real* Flesh, and was identical with that Body which hung on the Cross. Now the Scriptures certainly teach us that our body will be like His, true matter, and, although existing in a new and glorious mode, yet fundamentally the same as our physical part in this life.

II. St. Paul seems to exhaust his fertile mind in

this fifteenth chapter of First Corinthians in describing the wonders of our body in its risen state. "It is raised in incorruption," he says. By virtue of this "impassibility" it is forever free from pain or affliction, and has the bloom of perfect health. "It is raised in glory," so great that the Saint can speak of the "clarity" of our risen body as comparable to the glory of the sun, moon and stars. We shall be decked with light as with a garment, for the body which shall be restored to us on the resurrection morning will be transparent to the light dwelling in our souls in the degree which we have merited by our holiness in this present life. "It is raised in power," continues St. Paul, suggesting that we shall have "agility" like that of our Lord, enabling us to move from place to place, as swiftly as thought. Lastly, "It is raised a spiritual body," endowed with "subtlety" or the freedom which now is enjoyed only by pure spirits.

III. Our resurrection life will afford us joy of which we cannot now conceive. But three of its blessings we know: (a) The afflicted shall be made whole and receive greater glory for their patient endurance of suffering (Rom. viii: 17). (b) Our parting with our dear ones shall be over and there will be no more tears. We shall know our beloved dead just as the saints who arose with Jesus were recognized in Jerusalem. (c) The lifelong conflict of soul and body shall be over, and both shall be given up, in perfect harmony, to the worship and service of God.



Saturday after the Fourth Sunday after Easter
Holy Unction. Read St. James v: 12-16

I. When the lamp of our life is burning low in our sickness, our holy mother, the Church, brings

blessed oil to make it blaze up again, it may be in our bodies, certainly in our souls. She is like the good Samaritan who found the wounded wayfarer by the road to the City of Sin, and poured in oil to soothe and heal him; only what she brings to me is far more than a natural medicine. The Chrism of the Sick is "an unction of the Holy One." In it is accomplished for me that for which David thanked the Good Shepherd, saying, "*Thou* anointest my head with oil." For the Church rightly ascribes the institution of Holy Unction to our Lord Himself. He foreshadowed this sacrament when He sent out His apostles to anoint the sick with oil and heal them, since the forgiveness of their sins probably went with the cure of their bodies. For a remedy to the sick soul usually accompanied our Lord's miracles of physical healing; as He said to the paralytic by the Pool of Bethesda: "Sin no more, lest a worse thing befall thee," implying that He had forgiven the man's sins. And often He used to declare when He had cured anyone: "Thy faith hath *saved* thee," indicating that the *soul* had been healed, as well as the body. But it was during the Great Forty Days, when He was "speaking of the things pertaining to the Kingdom of God," that, as we believe, He actually gave us this one of the sacraments.

II. It is St. James, the Bishop of Jerusalem, at that time the primal see of Christendom, who, in a letter addressed to the whole Church, directs the faithful to use this sacrament in case of illness. It is not that he is introducing it; rather he thinks of it as being one of the ordinary sacraments of the Church, which Christians are in danger of passing over in favor of some magical form of healing. "Is any man afflicted, let him pray;" he directs, "is any merry, let

him sing psalms. Is any sick among you, let him call for the elders" and be anointed. Thus in apostolic times it was as usual for a Christian to be anointed in illness as for him to pray in trouble or sing in his joy.

III. I resolve whenever I am in peril of death through illness to use this Scriptural remedy. For by it, if my Lord thinks best, my body will be brought into the way of recovery, as countless of the faithful have been helped through the Christian ages. But be that as it may, I know that this sacrament will be to me "the prayer of faith," which "shall save" my soul. My Lord will certainly "raise me up" by giving me forgiveness and spiritual strength.



Rogation Sunday

Prayer for Temporal Benefits. Read the Gospel for the Day.

I. Our dependence upon Divine Providence is to be unbounded. The Holy Scriptures teach this truth under the figure of all things coming down to us from God's Hand. Thus it is said, "in Whose Hand thy breath is," showing that we could not draw another breath unless it were given us by our Heavenly Father. "My times," so David addresses God, "are in Thy Hand." Not another moment of life may I have unless Almighty God bestows it upon me. And the Psalmist tries to express the whole beneficence of our Heavenly Father in this single sentence: "The eyes of all wait upon Thee, O Lord, and Thou givest them their meat in due season; Thou openest Thy Hand and fillest all things living with plenteousness." But not only do good gifts for our temporal welfare come from the Hand of Divine Love, but every spiritual blessing as well, for the Scripture says: "Thy

right hand is full of righteousness" (Ps. xlviii: 10). Let me learn to look to God's Hand that I may be led on to seek His Face, and His Smile, as the most precious of all the benefits He can bestow upon me.

II. It would be hard to exaggerate the power of prayer. The saints and spiritual writers have used what we might think extravagant expressions about it, were it not that Holy Writ speaks still more strongly. Tertullian says that "prayer is the arms by which Heaven itself is stormed and God allows Himself to be overcome." And St. Augustine described it as the "key of Heaven." But our Lord goes much further when in the Gospel for to-day, He testifies to us, with the double "verily" which always betokens special solemnity, "Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my Name, He will give it you."

III. Now as truly as I am entirely dependent upon God and have power with Him through my prayer which He has willed to be irresistible to Him, so is it true equally that the blessings He is ready to "pour upon" me are boundless and measureless. "I have a very rich Father, He owns the whole universe." St. Paul assures me that God is not simply rich in Himself, but that His wealth belongs to me for the asking: "The same Lord of all is rich unto all that call upon Him."



Rogation Monday.

Our Dispositions in Prayer.

Read Isa. xxx: 18-21; St. Luke xi: 9-10

I. I must approach God in my prayers with the humility, confidence and love which are becoming in His child. Some simple rules out of Holy Scripture will direct me how to ensure this filial attitude towards

my Heavenly Father: (a) "Speak not with a stiff neck," the Psalmist directs (lxxv: 5). To pray in a spirit of pride would be to cause even the God of love to resist me (St. James iv: 6). (b) "I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also" is a resolution I may take from St. Paul (I Cor. xiv: 15): In the very beginning of my devotions I must realize that I am speaking to Almighty God, Whom I must wait upon with the greater reverence because He is my Father. (c) The spirit of voluntary self-denial and penance is very pleasing to God, when it is done by a soul under the impulse of the Holy Ghost in the spirit of filial piety (Dan. x: 12).

II. But confidence ought to mark our childlike heart toward God. God "will be very gracious unto thee at the voice of thy cry," Isaiah assured his people, "when He shall hear it, He will answer thee." Our Lord would have us conceive the utmost trust in the divine willingness to answer our petitions. We need only ask and it shall be given us. The saints, following their Master's lead, are never tired of assuring us that our prayers are incredibly fruitful. One points out that "God gives so much to those who do not ask Him; what will He not give to those who ask Him?" And St. Bernard urges us to be sure we are heard in Heaven, warning us that "our confidence is the measure of the graces we receive from God; if our confidence in God is great we receive great grace, if it is little we shall receive but little."

III. Yet even my dispositions for prayer are formed in my heart by God, if only I yield myself to the inspirations of His Blessed Spirit. "Lord, Thou preparest their heart, and Thine ear hearkeneth thereto," said the Psalmist. Blessed Juliana conceives of God as thus expressing this love of His, leading Him

to dispose each Christian soul for prayer: "I am ground of thy beseeching: first it is My will that thou have it; and after, I make thee to will it; and after, I make thee to beseech it and thou beseechest it. How should it then be that thou shouldest not have thy beseeching?"



Rogation Tuesday

Mistaken Prayers.

Read St. Luke xii: 13-21

I. Three wrong prayers are given in the Gospel for our instruction. They represent forms of what is actually self-seeking, but which has the *appearance* of being rightful entreaty. The first was the petition of the man whose elder brother had received the inheritance of his father's property by the right of primogeniture. "Master," was the prayer of the younger son, "speak to my brother that he divide the inheritance with me." Thus in his covetousness he would have drawn our Lord down to his own purpose, instead of himself rising to the divine purpose for him. Insistent desire for some fancied temporal gain, would seek to bring God down to my desire, while self-forgetting love will carry me up to God.

II. The prayer of a mother is our second example. Salome came to Jesus and besought Him: "Lord, grant that these my two sons may sit, the one on Thy Right Hand, and the other on the Left in Thy Kingdom" (St. Matt. xx: 21). This does not seem to have been the result of mere worldly ambition, for Salome very probably knew that her sons if they were on the right and left of Christ would have to risk suffering and death with Him. The fault lay in the fact that she was seeking a place for them which God had not prepared for them. Let not my prayer be:

"O God lead me out of these circumstances into a larger, fuller life," but rather: "Help me so to live in these surroundings that I may use them according to Thy will to rise up to a higher plane instead of yielding to them and sinking to a lower level."

III. The third wrong prayer is that of a sister. All three, therefore, were in reference to some one nearly related to the petitioner, as if to indicate that we are most liable to selfishness about what touches our interest closely. St. Martha was not content that her sister should sit at Jesus' Feet, devoting herself in that way to Him. In the leafy tabernacle where St. Mary was paying her homage she seemed to her sister who was "distracted about much serving" (St. Luke x: 40), to have a more blessed place than her own. St. Martha must teach me not to ask querulously for change of work. If it be His blessed will let me rejoice that I must pray with busy feet.



Rogation Wednesday

Apparent Fruitlessness of Prayer.

Read Psalm cix: 1-5

I. Even delay in the answering of our prayers is an advantage to us. As St. Chrysostom assures us, "God defers hearing our prayers, not because He rejects them, but because He wishes to contrive to draw us to Him." And there are many seeming denials which are really answers. Let me always remember that my Lord promises me *whosoever* I ask in faith, but He does not say that I am to have it *whensoever* or *howsoever* I ask it. The gracious answer may come to me unobserved, because it takes a different form from that which I expected. The eaglets in the fable cried out to their parent: "Teach us to fly!" Where-

upon the mother flew down and with claw and talon tore the nest from beneath her young, so that they were obliged to mount up aloft after her. So with my soul; God may see that the only way He can grant my prayer for a higher flight toward the Sun of Righteousness is by rending out of my grasp something which I cling to upon earth and which holds me down.

II. But actual refusals of what we plead for may be the truest response of love which even God can make. "If we knew what God knows we would wish what God wills"; or as it has been otherwise expressed :

"God nothing does nor suffers to be done,
But what thou wouldest thyself, couldst thou but see
The end of all He does as well as He."

III. To suppose that He is ever deaf to prayer is pagan. Thus the classical heathen used to say when they failed of the result of their petitions to the king of the gods, "Zeus is nodding." Elijah could not more grossly insult Baal, as a mere idol, than by saying of him 'Either he is talking, or gone aside, or on a journey, or sleepeth and must be awakened.' But the Psalmist gives me the motto of a life filled with the conviction that God's Ear and God's Heart are ever open to my supplications: "I *am* prayer," he said. (Ps. cix: 4.)



Ascension Day

Christ's Work in Heaven.

Read Rev. i: 5; v: 1-7

I. Jesus seated at the Right Hand of Power is "the Prince of the kings of the earth"; it is He Who controls the course of history. In His keeping is the

whole future of the Church and of each soul. Only His pierced Hand can unroll the scroll of my life, unless I force its issues according to my own self-will. Christ is the Conqueror and sovereign Lord on His throne in Heaven; He is also, still, the sacrificed Victim; and by this double title He "hath prevailed to open the Book [of Destiny]." St. John was bidden to behold the Lion, but when he looked he saw a Lamb as it had been slain, and the Church and all lower nature appeared in his vision to be waiting in utter dependence and adoration upon this Divine King and Priest. For the "elders" represent the Catholic Church, and the "four living creatures" symbolize creation redeemed and glorified through Christ (v: 11 ff.). Let me, in harmony with that universal chorus of praise, worship Jesus as my King and love Him as my Saviour.

II. The Scripture reveals my Lord in Heaven, not as a warrior taking his rest and enjoying his triumph, but as the "Forerunner," or "exploring Advance Guard," "for us" (Heb. vi: 20). Under this bold figure St. Paul teaches us that Jesus has entered into eternal life to prepare for the everlasting bivouac of His militant host in the world.

III. When He appeared to St. John it was as the High Priest "girt about the paps with a golden girdle"; and in the Epistle to the Hebrews, written to encourage Christians under severe persecution, He is again and again represented as the "Priest forever." This means that our Lord is perpetually pleading His Passion for us in the offering of Himself, forever re-presenting the Sacrifice of Calvary with all its power of blessing to our souls. For by His very Session at the Right Hand of God in His crucified Humanity, He appears before the Father as the Lamb Which is "as it had been slain."



Second Day in the Octave of the Ascension**Looking Up to Jesus.**

Read Heb. vii: 14-25

I. Of our Saviour in Heaven St. Paul wrote to the Hebrews in their time of trouble and danger, that "He is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them." This salvation from the Divine Intercessor which is promised to all Christians in their time of need is an ever-present reality in each moment of trial, as is indicated by the present tense of the Greek verb; and it is "*to the uttermost*," that is, it extends to every part of our nature.

II. Yet I must not expect to be saved without an effort of my own, even by Incarnate God. I must 'come boldly unto the Throne of Grace that I may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.' For, looking up to Heaven, I see there my great High Priest Who can be touched with the feeling of my infirmities, and Who has been in all points tempted as I am. His throne is encircled with a rainbow, promising me mercy and inspiring me with hope.

III. The very purpose of Christ's exaltation and the Father's reward to Him for His Passion, the bestowal of "the Name which is above every name," is "that," or literally "in order that," 'in the Name of Jesus every knee should bow of those in Heaven and those in earth and those under the earth.' "The Name," or "Character," of Christ, therefore, has been endowed with supreme power with God, for the very purpose that, when we kneel and pray in that Character, having willed to be one with Christ in our petitions, all the Father's love and mercy should lie open to us.



Third Day in the Octave of the Ascension

Turning to the Stronghold.

Read St. Mark xvi: 14-20

I. St. Paul suggests to us that the completion of our Lord's human development, the 'consummation' of His perfect holiness and power by the gift of the Holy Ghost without measure at His enthronement, was that He might become "the Author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey Him" (Heb. v: 9). Evidently, then, I need only obey the guidance of that Holy Spirit Whom He has sent into my heart at baptism, in order that all power in Heaven and earth should be wielded by Incarnate God to save me. Turn thou then to the Stronghold, my soul, thou prisoner of hope. (Zech. ix: 12.)

II. But if I would have a share in the all-availing intercession of the "Priest upon His throne" (Zech. vi: 13), I must live a life spiritually detached from the world. For the prayer of Christ in the "upper room" (St. John xvii), is a type of His perpetual intercession in Heaven, and therefore it is true now as it was then, that He prays not for the world, but for them which God has given Him out of the world (St. John xvii: 9). So far, therefore, as I yield to the dominance of the spirit of the world, I forfeit the prayers of the Divine Intercessor.

III. No work of mine, however stupendous according to human opinion, will have the coöperation of my Lord, unless it is done, as all service is done in Heaven, for the love of God and to His glory. "If after the *manner of men*," said the great Apostle, "I fought with beasts at Ephesus, what advantageth it me?" (1 Cor. xv: 32, A. V. marg.). On the other hand, I claim the continual Presence and blessing of the great High Priest, if while living in the world, I

am not of it, but pass my days in prayer, good works, and frequenting the sacraments, so that through grace I make my sphere of life a bit of Heaven. For Jesus has not deserted the Church on earth. "He was received up into Heaven," it is true, "and sat on the Right Hand of God"; but when the apostles went forth preaching everywhere in the world, there was "the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following."



Sunday in the Octave of the Ascension

Prayers in Church.

Read Acts i: 10-14

I. A consecrated church is, as it were, a continuation of the "upper room" where Christ would have me look for blessings from Him as the little group of disciples waited to receive the Holy Ghost. How great a privilege it is to pass from the distractions of the world into the sacred stillness of a Christian church, and there before the altar give oneself to thoughts of God and to love for Him! So the Psalmist of old used to go into the temple for meditation. 'We have thought,' he says, 'about Thy loving kindness, O God, in the midst of Thy temple' (Ps. xlviii: 8). And there is special grace waiting for me to obtain by prayer within the consecrated precincts. For in setting the church apart the Bishop secured a larger measure of actual grace for those who pray within it; since in the collect of the consecration Eucharist he thus besought God: "Receive the prayers and intercessions of all those Thy servants who call upon Thee in this house, and give them grace to prepare their hearts to serve Thee with reverence and godly fear." Indeed God Himself has promised, "In all places where I record

My Name I will come unto thee and I will bless thee"; and, again, "Mine Eyes and Mine Heart shall be there perpetually" (Ex. xx: 24; 1 Kings ix: 3).

II. Private prayers must be the preparation for every service in the church, especially the holy service of the altar. In this I may learn a lesson from the Jews in our own day: When they enter a dwelling-house they touch the door-frame, into which is inserted a tiny scroll with the words: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God," and having touched it they kiss their fingers. I must lay aside the cares and desires of my temporal affairs, in love for the Lord God, when I enter His dwelling.

III. For in all my prayer-life there is nothing so important as that I should learn to worship God with all my heart and mind and soul. That which I ask of God belongs largely to my present needs, spiritual or temporal. "In that day," our Lord assures us, referring to the beginning of our eternal life after the general judgment,—"In that day ye shall ask Me *nothing*." But worship is the *permanent* element in prayer. My soul, let us begin now to practice for the endless alleluias of Heaven.



Fifth Day in the Octave of the Ascension

Holy Familiarity with God in Prayer. Read St. Matt. x: 29-37

I. "Prayer," says Bishop Moberly, "is not simply asking God for what I think I want; it is practising to think, and to will, and to speak face to face with God." This value of our prayer-life is the highest of all, for what could be a greater blessing than our being brought more and more into harmony with the divine will? "Prayer," said Mother Juliana, "oneth the soul

with God." Thus through devotion we are brought into a holy familiarity with our Heavenly Father.

II. The result of this deliverance from constraint with God is that we can speak freely to Him. "I pour out my heart by myself," the Psalmist says. We can speak to God of "commonplace" things, and ask for the satisfaction of our most ordinary needs, for God has a care for every hair of our heads (St. Matt. x: 30). "Give us," said the little child by a happy mistake,—"Give us this day our daily flowers." And we gain confidence that, while we *may* ignorantly ask some harmful thing, yet normally our mind will be right, because it will have been illuminated through its friendship with the all-knowing God. In any doubt we will follow the example of the Blessed Mother, when for thirty years she had been living in holy familiarity with Incarnate God. "They have no wine," she said, simply stating the facts and then resting in perfect trust, without any actual petition.

III. We shall be led through this blessed friendship with God to make frequent acts of love. St. Bernard tells us that "The cause of loving God is God, and the mode of loving is to love without measure." And we may gather from other great leaders of the devotional life that the way to increase in divine charity is simply to make it our habit to offer to God the assurance of our love for Him, especially when in times of spiritual dryness we have to force our response to our Divine Father and Friend.



Sixth Day in the Octave of the Ascension

Intercession.

Read Ps. viii.

I. Intercession is one special way in which I love my neighbor as myself, for the love which issues in

this work of mercy is a blessing to his soul and my own. The one who intercedes is purified and developed by his prayer for others, so that he is better prepared for his own spiritual strife. In the battle with Goliath, David defeated his antagonist and routed his own and his people's enemies. But in the Eighth Psalm, in which, it is thought, he refers to this victory, he ascribes it to his prayers: "Out of the *mouth* of babes and sucklings hast Thou established strength, because of Thine enemies, that Thou mightest still the enemy and the avenger." Through his intercessions, David was enabled to go out against his foe "in the Name of the Lord of Hosts," and so without armor or weapons he won the victory.

II. God promises to intercession an almost incredible efficacy. "Desire of Me," he says, "and I will give thee the heathen for thine inheritance and the utmost parts of the earth for thy possession" (Ps. ii: 8). Yet even this reward of our prayers for missions is not the greatest held out to us. Our Heavenly Father will deny us nothing, when we approach Him in intercession for souls. He stands ready to give us His very Kingdom for them, as our Lord has said: "Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the Kingdom."

III. Intercession is the one way in which we can make satisfaction to God, the Church, and our race, for the ever-widening circles of evil influence which we have caused by each one of our sins. Doctor Pusey urged the Religious Community of which he was chaplain to pray each night that God would, for their prayers and the love of Jesus, stop one sin that else would have been committed before the morning. "As every sin," he would say, "is the parent of other sins, and as every sin resisted may be the turning-

point of a man's life, who can say that there may not have been as many souls saved as there were sins resisted."



Seventh Day in the Octave of the Ascension

Mental Prayer.

Read St. Luke i: 59-68

I. Our Heavenly Father loves best our *mental* prayer, because it is the simplest, deepest and most childlike. It is that "ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price" (1 St. Peter iii: 4). Jesus chose for His most intimate friends, and the foundation-stones of the New Jerusalem, fishermen who through the long watches of the night out on the lake, had been used to a holy intercourse with God in prayer.

II. Our best and most fervent praise of Him grows out of meditation, because this spiritual practice deepens in our hearts the realization of divine truth. Thus Zacharias had for many years been accustomed as a priest to recite the Eighteen Benedictions of his Jewish office, yet it was not until he had been for nine months dumb that the spiritual meaning of these rabbinical phrases came home to him. After that long period of silent devotion he was able to compose out of them the Benedictus which we recite daily.

III. Mental prayer most readily passes into action, because every meditation concludes with some resolution inspired by the new insight into divine truth which we have gained through it. "Thy testimonies are wonderful," the Psalmist cried to God, "therefore doth my soul keep them." As I realize more and more profoundly the unearthly spiritual beauty of God's revelation, I shall find my obedience becoming more prompt, easy and sweet.



Eighth Day in the Octave of the Ascension**The Prayers of the Saints.**

Read St. Matt. xvii: 1-5

I. Even God's Incarnate Son, when He needed sympathy, called the saints to His aid. On the Mount of the Transfiguration He had gone apart from the body of the disciples to pray. His apostles had fallen asleep while He was still pleading for the never-failing help of His Father, and thereupon, it seems, He called to Him Moses and Elijah for the comfort of their fellowship. So it is that even when my friends on earth cannot appreciate my need, and therefore cannot help me with their intercessions, I can still find assistance in the prayers of God's holy ones in Heaven.

II. Bishop Gore commenting on Romans xi: 28, where St. Paul says that even the unbelieving Jews were beloved of God "for the Fathers' sakes," gives us this wise thought: "We belong to the same Body as the apostles and martyrs, the virgins and saints, we, too, are beloved, for these our Fathers' sakes. And they, too, we cannot doubt, are conscious of our fellowship with them, and if we are trying to live in the same spirit with them, we must believe that they are supporting and helping us, as, in Christ, our sympathetic advocates and allies."

III. We ought not to think of ourselves as removed from the Church Triumphant. We "are come unto the Mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to the spirits of just men made perfect" (Heb. xii: 22 f.). All around us is a cloud of witnesses, who look down with intense interest and sympathy upon us as we run the race which they have already won. St. Paul urges us to 'look away' to this shining multitude

and Jesus its King, so that under the inspiration of their encouragement, we can "lay aside every weight and the sin which doth so easily beset us and run with patience the race that is set before us" (Heb. xii: 1). But we are closer to the blessed ones even than this "cloud of witnesses" would suggest, for we are "fellow-citizens with the saints and of the household of God" (Eph. ii: 19). As readily, and as properly, as I may say to my brother at our family table, "Pray for me," I may bespeak the intercession of God's elder children who dwell with me in the one family of our Heavenly Father.



Friday after the Octave of the Ascension

Our Lord's Example in Prayer.

Read St. Luke v: 12-17

I. Our Blessed Lord was continually at prayer. Even amid the labors of His ministry, He was accustomed to withdraw Himself into the wilderness and pray. St. Luke's words in our passage for reading, in the Greek, show that the prayers of Jesus were many, the wildernesses more than one, and the withdrawals frequently repeated. When, therefore, He tells us that *we* ought always to pray and not to faint, He is but asking us to follow His example. He would have us take our part with those souls whose "home is prayer, whose labour is prayer, whose rest is prayer." The Our Father, indeed, may have come from the very heart of His devotions, the clause "forgive us our trespasses" being His intercession for sinners. The Fathers loved to call the Lord's Prayer the "Breviary of the Gospel."

II. Jesus experienced the vicissitudes of prayer, and set us the example of heroic perseverance

through all spiritual trials. Contrast His calm, High Priestly intercession in the "upper room," and the agonized "Thy will be done" of Gethsemane; the magnanimous First Word on the Cross and the unspeakable pathos of the Fourth Word.

III. For the success of our day, in the highest and truest sense of success, we must pray for God's blessing upon our plans and hopes. Our Lord rose a long time before dawn in order to have sufficient opportunity for His prayers; and in the strength He thus obtained He did so many mighty works that the world itself could not contain books enough wherein to record them (St. John xxi: 25). If I would share His effectiveness I must in my morning prayers offer to God the things I hope to accomplish that day, so that I may have an Almighty Helper in all my works.



Whitsun Eve

The Spirit of Supplications.

Read Rom. viii: 1-27

I. St. Paul teaches us that the supernatural sphere of our prayer-life is the Holy Ghost. We are to be "praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit" (Eph. vi: 18). At my devoions, therefore, I know that my mind is illuminated by the light, and that my will may be enkindled by the love, of the Blessed Spirit. It is through Him we fulfil our Lord's precept. "When ye pray say: 'Our Father,'" for it is declared in Holy Writ that when we became sons of God through baptism He "sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, Abba [Father], Father." And the Paternoster is the type of all prayers. We are, moreover, directed by our Lord to ask "in His Name," or "Character"; and the Spirit

Who comes from our ascended Lord enables us to pray in perfect union with Him, and, therefore, with His Mind and Heart. In mental prayer once more the Blessed Spirit speaks to us of Heaven, and bears witness with our souls that we are the children of God (Rom. viii : 16), so that He leads us to acts of love and holy resolutions.

II. The Paraclete assists in my work of intercession, as the Spirit of Sanctification. By the fire of divine love which He sheds abroad in my heart He burns out all that is evil. Just as the charcoal is made by burning certain qualities out of the wood, leaving only the material which will burn in the censer with a steady, intense glow, so the fuel of sin and our fitful passions must be burned out of our hearts before our prayer can be set forth thereon as incense in God's sight. But "the supplication of a *righteous* man availeth much in its working" (St. James v : 16, A.V. marg.).

III. The Holy Ghost is my Advocate in prayer. He "helpeth our infirmities," says St. Paul, suggesting by his Greek word One Who walks by our side "taking hold with us" to assist us in a difficult work; "For we know not what we shloud pray for" nor how to pray "as we ought, but the Spirit Itself maketh intercession for us with groanings" of fervent devotion "which cannot be uttered." Since He is God, He can only pray in and through our hearts, but He so identifies Himself with us that the supplication can be rightly thought of as His. Thus even our inarticulate prayers are intelligible to Him Who knows the Mind of the Spirit pleading through them.



Whitsun Day

The Spirit of Union. Read the Epistle for the Day.

I. The Third Person of the Blessed Trinity is the Divine Bond in Whom the Father and the Son are perfectly united in One. Now our Lord's prayer for His people was, "That they all may be one; as Thou, Father, art in Me and I in Thee, that they also may be one in Us." Thus it is to be through that same Spirit of union Who unites the Three Divine Persons in the Godhead that we are to have union with one another. 'The fruit of the Spirit,' says St. Paul, 'is love, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness,' and the other virtues which make for Christian brotherhood. The Holy Ghost, coming upon the apostles in Tongues of Flame, enabled them to speak the message of eternal love in the language of everyone who heard their voices, and so to gather them all up into one fellowship of supernatural charity.

II. He is the Spirit Who brings souls into the unity of the Faith; as St. Paul wrote to the Corinthians, "By one Spirit are we all baptized into one Body." Throughout the Christian ages the Holy Ghost has wrought with the Church to bring converts into her fold. "The Spirit and the Bride say 'Come'" (Rev. xxii: 17).

III. God the Holy Ghost unites us with God. He was the Fiery Chariot and Divine Whirlwind Who carried Elijah up to Heaven, for afterwards we are told that it was the Spirit of the Lord Who had taken him up (2 Kings ii: 11-16). We also need only give ourselves up to Him and He will carry us into our Father's Arms. "As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God, and if children, then heirs, heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ."



Second Day in the Whitsun Octave**The Spirit of Truth.**

Read 1 Cor. ii: 11-16

I. It is by the Holy Ghost that we are enabled to pierce the veil of nature and behold behind it nature's God. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. But he that is spiritual discerneth all things" (A. V. marg.). When we gaze on some beautiful scene we are enabled by the Holy Ghost to apprehend God, Whose Mind is revealed to us through the lovely forms which His Thought has taken. Through every work of Christian genius, also, we perceive the Divine Master Workman; through every achievement of pure and noble art we discern the Divine Artist. Thus the Lord said of Bezaleel: "I have filled him with the Spirit of God . . . in all manner of workmanship" (Ex. xxxi: 2).

II. The Holy Spirit of truth teaches us the Faith (2 Cor. iv: 13), and gives us steadfastness in the Catholic Religion, "the Way" by which our souls must journey home to God (Acts xxiv: 14, 22, A. V. marg.). "Stand fast," St. Paul exhorts us, "in one Spirit, with one mind, striving together for the Faith of the Gospel." And the Holy Ghost Himself sets us the example of receiving the truth from the Father, rather than relying upon our own private judgment as to what it should be. "He shall guide you into all the truth," our Lord promised His Church, "for He shall not speak from Himself, but whatsoever He shall hear that shall He speak" (St. John xvi: 13, A. V. marg.).

III. I receive from the ascended Christ this Divine Vicar of His to teach me His perfect wisdom (Isa. xi: 2). The natural man cannot please Him be

cause he 'minds the things that be of men'; and if I would 'mind the things of God' (St. Matt. xvi: 23, A.V.marg.), it can only be by my becoming more and more one Spirit with Christ through His communicating the Holy Spirit of truth to me.



Third Day in the Whitsun Octave

The Spirit of Power.

Read 2 Tim. i: 7-11

I. Christ communicates to us "a spirit . . . of power and love and discipline" (R. V.), that we may have the courage and devotion to confess Him before men and devils. The opposite of this spirit is "the spirit of fear" which St. Paul here repudiates. The Greek word indicates a *vicious* cowardice, which, like murder, impurity, and idolatry, brings its victims to the lake of fire at last. But through the Blessed Spirit we become brave and loyal followers of our Captain of Salvation. The stern virtues which our fealty to Christ demands,—courage, love which will bear suffering, and discipline,—will be ours as we march on, strengthened by the Holy Ghost.

II. Now as I must have the Paraclete in me, so must I go to my Christian strife in Him, surrounded by His holy influence. Practically, this will mean constant hearkening to Him, and obedience to His inspirations. "Walk in the Spirit," says St. Paul again and again, and his thought seems to be, "*Keep step with the Spirit.*"

III. The Greek word "discipline" in our passage has a double significance. It includes the thought of the trained soul *teaching others* the spirit of self-control. As one soldier may by his influence encourage and strengthen his fellow, so may I communicate to

others the heroic virtues which will make us both loyal soldiers of the Crucified unto the end.



Fourth Day in the Whitsun Octave

The Indwelling of the Holy Ghost. Read St. John xiv: 15-19

I. The Blessed Spirit is, in theology, said to proceed from the will of God, and God's will is love, so that in the Third Person of the Adorable Trinity we perceive especially the infinite love of the Divine Being. He still strove with man and longed to remain in the heart of His poor sinful creatures, when the justice of God would have withdrawn Him (Gen. vi: 3, A.V. marg.). Now He is dwelling in my heart. In His love He is willing, even glad, to be with the weakest and least lovable of souls. Let me strive to recollect His Presence within me, and glorify this God Who deigns to dwell in my body and my spirit (1 Cor. vi: 19-20).

II. As in recollection, so in meditation, the Holy Ghost is our Divine Helper. Both the Scriptures we use and the resolution which is the fruit of our mental prayer come from Him. The Bible is divine music written by the "Finger of God"; as our ears become educated we discover in it His ineffable harmonies. And when, by meditation on Holy Writ, we have been led on to yearn after God, and to determine upon making a step towards Him by applying at once in our spiritual life the inspiration we have received, this resolution is what St. Paul calls *taking* "the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God."

III. The night before He suffered, Jesus promised the Comforter to His priesthood gathered around Him, saying 'He shall be in you. I will not leave

you orphans, I will come to you.' Thus He revealed to us that it is through His Spirit enduing the priesthood with power that He comes to us in the Blessed Sacrament as "the Everlasting Father," so that we are no longer left orphans. And as the Paraclete brings the King of Love to us, so also He enables us to receive Him with praise and answering love. "Be filled with the Spirit," St. Paul urges us, "singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord" (Eph. v: 18 f.).



Fifth Day in the Whitsun Octave

The Spirit of Consecration.

Read 2 Cor. vi: 14-18

I. "The fellowship," or "communion," "of the Holy Ghost" is with each Christian. My body is His temple and He is in me (1 Cor. vi: 19). 'Now what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness, and what communion hath light with darkness, or what part hath he that believeth with an unbeliever, or what agreement hath the temple of God with idols?' Do I always remember that I carry God within me when I go into the company of unbelievers and worldlings? Or do I walk heedlessly, and lightly incur the risk of infection? "Come out from among them, and be ye separate," saith the Lord, "and touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you."

II. But, more than simply keeping this temple of the living God free from profanation, I must 'sanctify the Lord God in my heart' (1 St. Peter iii: 15). The particular way in which St. Peter would have us keep Him holy is by our suffering for righteousness' sake. A young girl who had been converted during the great general mission at Leeds, England, was vilified and insulted on account of her faith by her mates in

the factory where she worked, but she bore all silently and cheerfully. After some months of unabated suffering, when through it all she had maintained her serene loyalty to her Saviour, she died. Then within her gown, just over her heart, they found she had been keeping the text "He opened not His mouth." She had been sanctifying the Lord God in her heart.

III. The Holy Spirit of consecration brings me power from on high to meet all my temptations. A comparison of the evangelists shows that they thought even of our Lord as going up to the Mount of the Temptations with the Holy Ghost before and behind, within and around, Him. For St. Matthew says, that He was "*led up of the Spirit*"; St. Mark, "*the Spirit driveth Him into the wilderness*"; St. Luke, "*Jesus being full of the Holy Ghost . . . was led in the Spirit in the wilderness forty days*" (R.V. marg.). Do I, each morning, beseech the Holy Ghost for His fellowship that I may go forth into the day in the strength of the Lord God?



Sixth Day in the Whitsun Octave

The Spirit of Sonship to God.

Read Micah vi: 1-8

I. To the Third Person of the Godhead we attribute the beginning and continuance of our life as God's children. For He is the Spirit of adoption (Rom. viii: 15), by Whom we were all baptized into the Body of God's Son (1 Cor. xii: 13). From Him also we draw the counsel which we need for our life of sonship; "He hath showed thee, O man, what is good: and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?"

II. The "free Spirit" teaches a holy pride of caste, a royal law of *noblesse oblige*, which will make us obey our Father willingly. Thus Christ said that all those who do the will of God are His brethren,—governed, therefore, by His own filial devotion. Through this Spirit of sonship, our environment with all its attractions becomes to us, not a cause of sin, but a sacrament of our Father's Providence, whereby we are the more powerfully drawn to Him. "Religion," according to St. Augustine's derivation, is a "binding-back" to God. Each beautiful object of the natural world is but a ring which He puts upon the finger of His son to mark this holy bond (St. Luke xv: 22). I must never so yield to the fascination of the world as to forget that it is the token of His love to whom I am bound by the sacred tie of religion.

III. The history of the Old Testament word for "saint" teaches me how my spiritual development depends upon my learning "mercy," or, as the Hebrew word means literally, "loving-kindness," from my Heavenly Father. For this word is first used of God's loving kindness in itself, afterwards of His love for man, still later of man's love for man, and last of all of man's love for God. Now one who possessed this highest kind of love was called "saint," the word in Hebrew being a derivative of that for "loving-kindness." May the Holy Spirit spread abroad in my heart God's loving-kindness, and so at length make me a saint!



Seventh Day in the Whitsun Octave

The Spirit of Love.

Read 2 Cor. iii: 2-6

I. 'The epistle of Christ is being written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God, on the

fleshy tables of our hearts.' Our Lord is inscribing there His message to God and to man, in letters of the fire of love "shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost" (Rom. v: 5). Day by day, by some thought of charity, some word of kindness, some deed of mercy, a little is added to the sacred inscription upon our souls.

II. But because of His loving trust in us, that the epistle of Christ will be written through to the end and be claimed by Him in the Judgment, the seal is set to the letter even when it is really only just begun. For in Ephesians iv: 30, St. Paul says that by the Holy Spirit of God "ye were sealed unto the day of redemption." Primarily he seems to be thinking of Confirmation administered to the Christians he was addressing probably immediately after their baptism; and the figure of sealing a letter affords him a double analogy to the Holy Spirit's work in this sacrament. For as a seal is used to secure a letter, so the grace of Confirmation protects us against the intrusion of Satan. And as a man used his seal, impressed with his signet, to identify a letter as his own, so the supernatural character impressed upon my soul in my confirmation, deepening that which I received in baptism, was the mark given by Divine Love to claim me as His own.

III. On my soul, therefore, Christ's letter to God is written with the love of the Holy Ghost, and sealed by Him with the character of supernatural charity. But, more than this, my soul itself is being carried on to God by this Blessed Spirit, Who like a stream "out of the throne of God and of the Lamb" has caught it up on His Bosom and is bearing it back to the Source from which He proceeded, the Heart of God.



Conversion of St. Paul

Obedience to the Heavenly Vision. Read Acts xxvi: 12-20

I. The great saint and minister of Christ whose conversion we are celebrating shows us what results every new vision of our Lord should bring forth in our lives. 'I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision,' he declared to King Agrippa, 'but shewed unto them of Damascus, and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the coasts of Judea, and then to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance.' To behold Christ in some new and truer light, as the result of my prayer, involves the obligation and the privilege of becoming in Him a centre of that Radiance which is above the brightness of the sun, and of spreading it in ever-widening circles around me.

II. The sacred writers of the New Testament have each his own conception of when the Gospel may be said to take its beginning. St. Mark sets it at the preaching of the Baptist, St. Luke at the birth of the Baptist, St. Matthew at the inception of Christ's human genealogy, and St. John synchronizes it with the eternal generation of the Word, Who was in the beginning "with God" and "was God"; but St. Paul in his Epistle to the Philippians places the beginning of the Gospel at the conversion of the Greeks (Phil. iv: 15). All these various conceptions are true and harmonious. The Gospel is, as St. John rightly thought of it, everlasting. Yet St. Paul's conception also is true; it is communicated with all its infinitude of happiness and glory to newly baptized or absolved souls, and in a true sense begins anew with each of them.

III. This great Apostle teaches me that true

obedience to the heavenly vision demands of me the utmost preparedness. "Lift up," or "set straight," he directs me, "the hands that hang down, and the palsied knees and make straight paths for your feet, that that which is lame be not put out of joint, but rather be healed" (Heb. xii: 12 f., R.V.). I must by the help of my Lord set right my hands for conflict, and my palsied knees for progress; I must trace out the straight and narrow way with my feet, that I may be a source of healing and of the warmth of love to weaker souls.



The Purification of the Blessed Virgin Mary

The Dedication of Our Saviour.

Read Num. iii: 5-13

I. When it is said that the Blessed Mother "presented" Jesus to the Lord, the Greek word is a translation of one which in the Old Testament signified to make a child "pass through" the fire to Moloch. Thus our Saviour at His presentation in the Temple was dedicated as a Sacrifice, to save the Gentile children from the white-hot hands of the idols. In place of abject superstition and idolatry, the salvation of the God of love was now "prepared before the face of all people."

II. The five shekels which were given to redeem the Holy Infant had been required since the Mosaic Law was given. Up to that time the eldest son of every family had been God's priest. But when by the Law the Levites were set apart for the priesthood, every first-born son of the other tribes had to pay five shekels as the price of his release from the active duties of the Temple. He was dispensed from the exercise of his office, while it yet resided inalienably

in him. Thus the redemption money pointed to the fact that our Lord as a First-born Son had the most primitive kind of priesthood. And at once we see the varied blessings this ministry of His will bring. Old Anna found in him the redemption for which she had looked so long, and the very sight of His Infant Face filled her with new life, courage and happiness. To Simeon He was the Consolation of Israel, and having seen Him the old man could welcome death with joy. In this beginning of Jesus' priesthood we see a promise which has been fulfilled in all succeeding ages, that this Priest would be the Redemption of man in life and his Consolation in death.

III. Christ's friends, His holy mother and foster-father, gave pigeons in sacrifice for His birth, and shekels for His redemption. No doubt they gave all they had for Him. But in the end He was sacrificed by the Sadducees, who recognized in Him an implacable enemy of their methods of extortion in the temple. Thus they slew Him to *save* their pigeons and shekels. Which shall I do, give up my all to save my Saviour, or sacrifice Him for some selfish ambition of my own?

St. Matthias's Day

The Holy Ghost, not "Chance," Controlling Us.

Read the Epistle for the Day.

I. There is no such thing as "chance" or "luck." The Pharisees thought that men's lives were controlled by the stars, or, as the later astrologers would have said, by their "horoscope." But St. James declares that One holds our lives in His Hand, Who is above the stars, Who does not change with the moon. "Every good giving and every perfect gift

cometh down from the Father of Lights, with Whom is no variableness, neither shadow that is cast by turning" (St. James i: 17, A.V. marg.). St. Matthias, indeed, was chosen by "lot," but only because God condescended to use this commonplace means to manifest His Will.

II. After Pentecost the lot was entirely done away in the apostolic Church, even as a humble medium through which the Holy Spirit spoke. Since He came down upon the apostles in the "upper room," He speaks directly through the Church, by the sacred ministry, and in the heart of the individual Catholic. Thus he spoke out at the Eucharist described in Acts xiii: 1, saying, "Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them." In my heart also He speaks, giving always some inspiration to greater holiness. The President, by pressing a button in Washington, ordered the explosion of a mine which removed the last embankment in the course of the Panama Canal. But the Holy Spirit is not at a distance. He is in my heart and in that heart He opens some fresh channel for the love of Christ to flow within me.

III. The sons of God are led by the Spirit of God,—led, not driven, for "where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty" (2 Cor. iii: 17). I know not what may be the special service to which He would guide me. St. Matthias, all the time the Lord Jesus went in and out among the apostles, "accompanied with them," and was at last called to be of their number. I must simply let the Finger of God point out the way for me, step by step.



The Annunciation

God's Love for Mary, and Ours. Read the Gospel for the Day.

I. The Blessed Virgin was the favorite daughter of God. Out of all generations of womankind He chose her; and the moment of her consent to His gracious invitation through His messenger was the "fulness of time" for which He had waited to effect the Incarnation. "Thou hast found favour with God," St. Gabriel declared to her. As far as was possible for a human being, she had by her holiness won the unique favor of the Father, so that He had accepted her to be the mother of His Son. Her bosom was the Paradise He chose for the Second Adam, Whom He loved with infinite and eternal tenderness.

II. The eager love of God the Son for Mary was so great that He outsped His messenger and was already in her breast when St. Gabriel came. For the holy archangel's greeting to her was, "Hail, thou that are endued with grace, the Lord *is with thee*" (St. Luke i: 28). Thus before she had received Christ in her womb, He had entered into her breast, and had endued her with the divine gift of His grace.

III. The Holy Spirit also shows this Blessed Mother His ineffable love. "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee," St. Gabriel said. The Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters on the first day of creation, "brooding over" them as a mother bird upon her nest. Once more, on the first day of the re-creation, this same Spirit is about to come, with the tenderness of God's Mother-love, upon Mary, the favorite of the Blessed Trinity. If God has so loved her, how ought I to give her my reverent devotion! Our great theologian, Bishop Pearson, says: "If Elizabeth cried with so loud a voice, 'Blessed art thou

among women,' when Christ was but newly conceived in her womb; what expressions of honour and admiration can we think sufficient, now that Christ is in Heaven and that Mother with Him? We cannot bear too reverent a regard unto the Mother of our Lord, so long as we give her not that worship which is due unto the Lord Himself."



St. Mark's Day

Christ Strengthening the Weak.

Read Philem. 24; 2 Tim. iv: 10-13

I. A majority of scholars identify with the saint of this day the young man who fled from our Lord in Gethsemane, leaving his linen loin-cloth in the soldiers' hands. It seems that he had been awakened by the lights and noise of the band of men entering the garden, whereupon he hastened out and arrived just in time to see our Lord being led away. At once he boldly "followed with" Him, so the Greek indicates, forgetting that he was only half clad. But when a soldier grasped the cloth about his waist he lost his courage and fled. Thus he appears in the beginning as having that impulsive, loving, weak-willed temperament, which he displayed in the episodes of his early years. Let us follow him in his development, however. It meant a great gain in self-control when he went as "attendant" or "servant" (Acts. xiii: 5, A. V. marg.) to St. Paul and St. Barnabas, even though he failed miserably when they journeyed among the savage people of Asia Minor. (Acts xiii: 13.) And from this period on to his days in Rome his progress was steady, until at last we find him with St. Paul as his "attendant" and "fellow

laborer," at a time and under conditions which called for great courage and strong will. So we have in his life a wonderful example of the miracle which our Lord performs in the making of a saint.

II. If I would become braver in my Christian warfare, I may well study the means which succeeded so well with St. Mark. First I must practice doing *little* disagreeable duties well. Our saint was a rich young man who owned slaves, a big house and fine clothes (Acts. xii: 12 f.). His mother could afford to entertain our Lord and His twelve apostles in the "large upper room" of his home. And the Greek word for the linen cloth he wore in Gethsemane shows that it was of the finest material. But he became a servant of itinerant preachers, with all the menial duties which this position entailed.

III. The second rule for strengthening my courage which I may derive from St. Mark's experience is that I should not be discouraged by my past cowardice, but that after prayer and self-discipline I should try again in the same place where I failed. Years after St. Mark flinched on the missionary journey into Asia Minor, he went back there when there was real danger to be apprehended, as we know from St. Paul's letter to secure him a safe reception (Col. iv: 10). And in the end he was intrusted, as the Church tradition relates, with the mission to Alexandria, where he had courage to give his life for Christ.



Saints Philip and James's Day **Christ Spiritualizing the Practical Temperament.**

Read the Gospel for the Day.

I. St. Philip is depicted in the Gospel as a practical, "commonsense," matter-of-fact, sort of man, the

kind that takes for his motto in life, "seeing is believing." Thus at the feeding of the five thousand he had been calculating just how much bread would be needed to feed so many people; only, when he reached what was to him the huge sum of two hundred pennyworth, he stopped in despair because he knew how lean was their common purse. To him it was a plain question of so much money to be spent for bread in the markets of the nearest towns. Yet this keen, discriminating mind has its place in the Kingdom, and in St. Philip our Lord showed His love for the practical temperament. Of this apostle alone it is said that Jesus *found* him (St. John i: 43). All the other apostles, moved by Christ's Spirit, found our Lord, but we read, "Jesus *findeth*" this practical apostle and "saith unto him, Follow me."

II. The miracle our Lord wrought was His lesson to spiritualize Philip by forcing him to expect and count upon that which cannot be catalogued among natural laws. He was to behold with his own eyes a commissary supplied for more than five thousand people, by God's use of a few loaves and fishes. The lesson seems very fresh and pertinent to-day when nature is being treated as a mechanism of natural laws by which God Himself is bound. And we, like St. Philip, behold results for which no human science can assign the causes. The cynic who said, "God is always on the side of the big battalions," was blinded to half the facts of history; for, in a manner that can be accounted for only through a belief in God, right has conquered over and over again, in the face of apparently overwhelming odds.

III. On the night before our Lord suffered, when He was making a supreme effort to win the faith of His apostles, it was St. Philip who said to him, "Lord

show us the Father and it sufficeth us." He wanted a theophany like that which was granted to Moses. Yet he had there with him God manifesting Himself in the Incarnation, the most perfect of all conceivable theophanies. Now our Lord at once revealed Himself to the honest, frank heart of His apostle, saying, "Hast thou not known Me, Philip? He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father." The spiritual comes to us under the veil of the practical, but it is so near we are likely to overlook it. Thus God Himself, with all His immeasurable power and love, is **very** near and very real in the heart of a little Christian child.



St. Barnabas's Day

A Son of Exhortation.

Read Acts xi: 22-26

I. "Barnabas" means "Son of Prophecy," or "Exhortation." The apostles gave him this surname in addition to his former name Joseph, probably in allusion to his chief work in the Church, which was prophecy and preaching. It is a most honorable title, for its root-word is the same as that from which is derived "Paraclete," our Lord's name for the Holy Ghost, and it implies that St. Barnabas "consoled" or "comforted" men. His qualifications for this office were that "he was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith." Thus he becomes to me an example of the holiness and power for good of a soul, which is not perhaps in itself remarkable, but which has been given up to the moulding wisdom and love of the Paraclete.

II. For St. Barnabas was chosen because of the endowment he had received from the Blessed Spirit to become with St. Paul a pillar of the Church at Antioch where the name "Christian" originated. Also,

it seems not too much to claim for him that he started St. Paul on his work of evangelizing the Gentiles. And he attained to St. Paul's noble spirit of laboring with his own hands for his daily bread (1 Cor. ix: 6), and along with the great Apostle received his commission from the Holy Ghost (Acts xiii: 1 f.). I may never take a prominent place in work for my Lord in the sight of men, but if I am "good," and "full of the Holy Ghost and of faith," I can imitate St. Barnabas in helping to build up the Body of Christ; I may have an influence upon some more gifted soul, through whom I shall do a great work for my Lord; and so I shall go forward in the company of those who turn many to righteousness.

III. Tradition relates that when St. Barnabas's body was found in Constantinople he bore on his breast, written in his own hand writing, the Gospel of St. Matthew. He who cared nothing for all his property but had willingly sold it and laid the money at the apostles' feet, had received from the Holy Ghost the blessed Gospel, which had indeed passed with him through the portals of death. Let this Son of Exhortation teach me to value the Faith of the Gospel above all temporal wealth.





